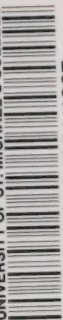


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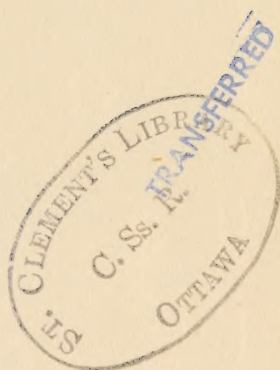
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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MARK

WITH INTRODUCTION, TEXT AND NOTES

COMPILED BY

ROBERT EATON

PRIEST OF THE BIRMINGHAM ORATORY

AUTHOR OF "THE MIRROR OF JUSTICE," "SING YE TO
THE LORD," ETC.

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INTRODUCTION

1. **The Author.**—In the fourteenth chapter of St. Mark's Gospel, we read of a young man who was seen in the Garden of Olives on the night of our Lord's capture there after His Agony. He was laid hold of by the soldiers, but made his escape, and fled. This incident, recorded only by St. Mark, is so slight and apparently unimportant, that the common opinion is that the young man was St. Mark himself. If so, it is the only mention of him in the Gospels. He is, however, introduced to us in the twelfth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, being there called "John, who is surnamed Mark." His mother's name was Mary, and it was to their home in Jerusalem that St. Peter went immediately after his miraculous delivery from prison by the Angel, and there he found "many gathered together." The house apparently was a large one, capable of holding at least a considerable section of the Christian community, and tradition tells us that St. Mark's family was fairly wealthy. Evidently St. Mark was already a person of some importance in the Christian community, and this early connection with St. Peter is not without its force and meaning. That St. Peter received St. Mark into the Church is gathered from the fact that in his first Epistle (1 Pet. v. 13) he speaks of him as "my son Mark," for such is the ordinary usage of Holy Scripture (cp. 1 Cor. iv. 14, 15, 17; 2 Cor. vi. 13; Gal. iv. 19; 1 Tim. i. 2; 1 Jn. ii. 1, 18). He is mentioned altogether eight times in the New Testament (Acts xii. 12, 25; xv. 37, 39; Col. iv. 10; Philem. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 11; 1 Pet. v. 13). Some have thought that he is the "man carrying a pitcher of water" (Mk. xiv. 13), who met the two disciples on their way to prepare the Pasch for our Lord.

Next we find St. Mark with St. Paul and St. Barnabas,

whose cousin he was (Col. iv. 10), on the former's first missionary journey. St. Barnabas was a Levite (Acts iv. 36), and many conclude from this that St. Mark also was of the priestly race. Together with these, he sailed from Antioch to Cyprus (Acts xiii. 25), and thence to Perge in Pamphylia. But then, "departing from them, he returned to Jerusalem." The reason of this is not easy to give with any certainty. It is quite possible that he hardly approved of St. Paul's work among the Gentiles, or at least felt uneasy about what seemed to him his too-ready reception of them into the Church. At least it is significant that he sailed from Perge to Jerusalem, not to Antioch, wishing perhaps to consult St. Peter on this very matter, and inform him of St. Paul's methods. Some five or seven years later he was consequently the occasion of the famous dispute at Antioch between St. Paul and St. Barnabas (Acts xv. 39), and then accompanied the latter to Cyprus.

But St. Paul, writing to Philemon from his prison at Rome in his first captivity about the year A.D. 61, sends him a greeting from "Mark and Luke, my fellow-labourers" (Philem. 24); and in the year A.D. 62, writing to the Colossians, he speaks of St. Mark as "a fellow-labourer," and says how he had been "a comfort" to him in his weary imprisonment. Evidently any want of good feeling had been set right before this date (Col. iv. 11).

St. Mark also laboured for the cause of our Lord in Ephesus and in Asia Minor generally. In 2 Tim. iv. 11, St. Paul, again a prisoner at Rome, directs St. Timothy, who was at Ephesus, to "pick up" St. Mark on his way to Rome, and bring him with him, adding as the reason: "for he is profitable to me for the ministry." Moreover, the fact that St. Peter, writing to various Churches in Asia Minor, sends them not only his own greetings, but also those of "Marcus, his son," makes it the more certain that St. Mark had visited those parts, and been associated with St. Peter in his missionary labours there (cp. 1 Pet. v. 13). The ten or twelve years which elapsed between the last mention of St. Mark in the Acts and this reference by St. Paul to his co-operation with him in

Rome, were probably the period in which he accompanied St. Peter. Indeed, he has come to be called by Papias, St. Irenaeus, Tertullian, St. Jerome and others the "interpreter of St. Peter," because his Gospel was written at St. Peter's dictation. It was St. Mark who founded the Church at Alexandria, as St. Jerome and others tell us. His body was removed A.D. 827 to Venice, which was formally placed under his protection, and in consequence the Lion, the symbol of St. Mark, even as the Eagle is the symbol of St. John, became the standard of the Venetian Republic, and in that city the noblest church in the world dedicated to St. Mark now stands. We cannot be certain of the time, manner, or place of his death.

That St. Mark, of whose life these slender details are all we know, is the author of the second of the four Gospels, is testified by tradition, and by writers of a very early date. Among these is St. Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, who was a contemporary of St. John the Evangelist, and who knew many of St. John's friends intimately. He says: "Mark, who had been Peter's interpreter, wrote down accurately the words and deeds of Christ, so far as he remembered them; but he did not record that which was said or done by Christ *in order*, for he neither heard the Lord nor followed Him; but afterwards he attached himself to Peter, who used to frame his teaching to meet the wants of his hearers, but not as making a connected narrative of the Lord's discourses." Here it is distinctly asserted that St. Peter's teaching was the basis of St. Mark's Gospel. Other writers, such as St. Irenaeus, St. Justin Martyr, Origen, and Clement of Alexandria testify to the same effect.

St. Mark was well qualified for his task. As a resident in Jerusalem he knew Aramaic, and as a Jew, who on one side at least was of Hellenistic descent, he would know Greek, while St. Peter would hardly have known sufficient Greek to address a Roman audience with success.

2. **Character of the Gospel.**—St. Mark's Gospel is pre-eminently *Petrine* in character. We have given to

us in Acts ii. 22-36 and x. 37-43 a compendium of the Gospel-story as it presented itself to St. Peter's mind. There we read of the beginning with St. John's baptism; then of "Jesus of Nazareth in Galilee"—"how God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost and with power, Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him—Whom the Jews killed, hanging Him upon a tree—Whom God raised up the third day, and gave Him to be made manifest"—Who is now on the right hand of God, swallowing down death, that we might be made heirs of life everlasting, being gone into heaven, the angels, and powers, and virtues being made subject to Him" (1 Pet. iii. 22). And it is precisely on these same lines that the Gospel of St. Mark is cast. Both give the selfsame picture of our Lord. In no Gospel, for example, are there so many miracles over evil spirits recorded as in this one; and repeatedly details are given which are absent from the other Gospels, and which only an eye-witness, like St. Peter, could have furnished. By its abundant internal evidence it shows us that it was written by one who knew the Apostles intimately, and above all St. Peter, and this is borne out by the many graphic and striking details as to *time, place, number, circumstances, and persons*, with which the various incidents placed on record abound, and which form so special a beauty of this Gospel. Some examples may here be given: (1) Of the paralysed man let down for cure through the roof of the house, we are told that he was carried *by four*; (2) at the storm on the lake, we are told that our Lord was "in the hinder part of the ship *sleeping upon a pillow*"; (3) at the miracle of feeding the five thousand with five loaves, we are told that the people were made to sit down "upon the *green grass, in companies and ranks, by hundreds and by fifties*"; (4) of the finding of the colt on which our Lord entered Jerusalem in triumph on Palm Sunday, we are told that "they found the colt *tied before the gate without, in the meeting of two ways*"; (5) of our Lord and the Twelve we are told, that they were so busy as "*not to have time even to eat*"; (6) at the banquet in the house of Simon the

leper, when St. Mary Magdalen anointed the feet of our Lord and Judas protested against the waste of precious money, we are told that he valued it "*at more than three hundred pence*"; (7) on the first Easter Day, when the holy women reached the sepulchre of our Lord, we are told that they beheld "*a young man, sitting on the right side.*"

Lastly, that St. Peter was in a very true sense the source and dictator of this Gospel, is seen from the fact that St. Mark passes over in silence all that could tend to the credit of St. Peter, but relates with great fulness all that could be set down to his discredit. Thus St. Peter's walking on the sea to meet our Lord, his great confession of faith at Caesarea Philippi, and his being named as the Rock on which our Lord would build His Church (cp. Mt. xvi.), are all passed over in silence; but the fact that St. Peter denied our Lord many times is recorded with the fullest detail and in the strongest terms. "There is certainly but little in this Gospel which did not fall within the limits of St. Peter's personal knowledge."

3. Date, Language, and Place.—It is the universal tradition that the Gospel of St. Mark was originally written in Greek, and probably between the years A.D. 63 and 67, though some date it as early as A.D. 45, or even A.D. 42. St. Irenaeus says that it was written after St. Peter's arrival in Rome—*i.e.*, early in A.D. 63. It certainly was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Most probably it was written in Rome, though some say it was written at Alexandria, or at Antioch in Syria.

4. Plan of this Gospel.—The Gospel of St. Mark is very truly "a LIFE of our Lord," simple in its arrangement, and fairly chronological in the order of its events. In this last-named respect it is very unlike the Gospel of St. Matthew, who, for his own purposes, grouped together sayings and actions of our Lord, quite regardless of the time at which they were said or done. In St. Mark's Gospel, the birth and early life of our Lord at

Bethlehem are entirely left out, and after a brief summary of the work of St. John the Baptist, and a short account of our Lord's baptism and triple temptation, we are at once plunged into the Public Life of our Lord—*i.e.*, into the two years of His Galilean preaching and ministry. Capharnaum was His headquarters, and thence He passed to other villages and towns of Galilee.

Then we can trace, by means of this crisp and clear account, how our Lord was gradually consolidating His claims and authority, gradually, too, winning the love and admiration and faith of all who came in contact with Him, till indeed "the whole world went after Him." We can trace also, far more closely than in any other Gospel, the steady training of the twelve Apostles for their future work, their warm love for their Master, their attachment to Him, and, side by side with this, the growing malignity and hostility of the Scribes, Pharisees, and other enemies of our Lord towards Him. Miracle after miracle is recorded, not merely over diseases, but over unclean and evil spirits, over the winds and sea, nay, over death itself.

Then come the great predictions of the Sacred Passion, which were made a full year before it actually took place; and after the Transfiguration and an account of the short ministry in Peraea, we are told of the great events of Holy Week, the entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the cursing of the barren fig-tree on the Monday, the long history of the "Day of Questions," as the Tuesday of Holy Week has been called, the retirement to Bethany on the Wednesday and Thursday, concluding with the scenes of the Passion, crowned by the glory of the Resurrection and Ascension, with one short sentence descriptive of the infant Church already at work. Such in brief outline is St. Mark's "bright and unartificial story."

5. **The Object of this Gospel.**—St. Mark's Gospel was written for Gentile converts, mainly, indeed, for Roman readers. The tradition that this Gospel was written at Rome is a strong one, and there is much internal evidence to support such a view. There are, for example, not a few Latinisms in the text (cp. executioner vi. 27;

vessel or sextarius vii. 4; centurion xv. 39; the phrase "to satisfy the people" xv. 15; the value of the widow's "mites" being explained in terms of Roman money xii. 42). Again, in xv. 1, Pilate is suddenly introduced without note or comment, as though the sacred writer took it for granted that his readers would know all about him and the office which he held.

On the other hand, that this Gospel was written for those quite unacquainted with Jewish language and customs, is clear from the careful explanation of Aramaic words (*e.g.*, Boanerges, Abba, Talitha cumi), of Jewish habits, also by the omission of all things said by our Lord that have special reference to the Jews. Similarly, the geography of Palestine is carefully explained: the Jordan, for example, is called a river (i. 9), Nazareth is said to be situated in Galilee (i. 9), and Bethany we are told is close to the Mount of Olives (xi. 1), which in turn is "over against the Temple."

Thus, while St. Matthew wrote his Gospel to show that our Lord was the true Messiah who was to come, the "desired of all nations," the One of Whom all the Prophets had spoken and the Psalmists had sung, and hence filled his narrative with quotations from the Old Testament; and while he gives us our Lord's great Sermon on the Mount which sets forth the New Law as the fulfilment of the Old, adding also our Lord's scathing denunciation of the Jews and Pharisees for their rejection of Him, St. Mark, on the other hand, makes no mention of the Sermon on the Mount, only once quotes the Old Testament, and never once refers to the Mosaic Law on his own account.

From Acts xxviii. 22, and from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, it is clear that the majority of the Christians living in Rome were proselytes and gentiles, and St. Mark clearly bore this in mind in writing his Gospel for them. He is bent on doing for them what St. Peter did for Cornelius, the centurion (Acts x. 36-42)—viz., to show our Lord to be the Son of God and the Lord of men. His one object is to portray our Lord as the Incarnate and wonder-working Son of God, living and acting amongst men, and to depict Him ever in the fulness of

His living energy. It is a Gospel that bristles with power; we can almost *see* the Lion of the tribe of Judah going about, proposing, like Samson of old, His riddle to men: "Out of the eater came forth meat, out of the strong came forth sweetness." It is of all the Gospels the simplest, the most pointed, and the most concise. It is "an unstudied outline, rather than a history," such as is the Gospel of St. Luke. The writer is concerned with the deeds of our Lord, rather than with His words, and His deeds are deeds of power. Our Lord, as St. Paul says, "was predestinated the Son of God in power" (Rom. i. 4), and such is the picture of Him drawn by St. Mark. The narrative is rapid and energetic, undisturbed by reflection, moving steadily and forcefully towards its goal.

6. **Special Features.**—Coming now to the chief features of St. Mark's Gospel, the first to be noticed is the great number of our Lord's miracles recorded in it. Indeed, it has been called the Gospel of Miracles. St. Mark gives no less than four *general* references (i. 32; iii. 10; iv. 13; vi. 55) to the vast number of our Lord's miracles of healing, which are not described in detail. Then he describes fully, and with all his picturesque detail, no less than eighteen miracles of our Lord, and for two of these (the deaf and dumb man, and the blind man at Bethsaida) we are indebted to him alone. There are (1) miracles over *nature* (e.g., the stilling of the storm, the feeding of the five thousand, the withering of the fig-tree); (2) miracles over the *evil spirits* (e.g., the lunatic boy and the legion cast into the swine); (3) miracles over *disease* (e.g., the cure of the man with a withered hand); (4) miracles over *death* (e.g., the raising to life of the daughter of Jairus). All these are minutely described; but especially does St. Mark dwell on the miracles *worked over evil spirits*, giving us fully the impressions of awe and wonder made on the bystanders, for they form a class of miracle that would specially strike the worshippers of false gods, for whom chiefly he was writing.

Passing from the Miracles to the Parables, we are at

once struck by the small number given by St. Mark. While St. Matthew gives us twenty Parables, and St. Luke even more, St. Mark gives us only four. One of these, however, the Parable of the seed growing secretly (iv. 26-29), is peculiar to St. Mark. Again, not only is the Divinity of our Lord strongly portrayed, as we have seen, but also His sacred Humanity, in all its tender grace and beauty. On fourteen occasions in this Gospel our Lord styles Himself "the Son of man." From St. Mark we learn that our Lord could *love* (x. 21), and *feel pity* (vi. 34); could *wonder* (vi. 6), and be *moved to anger* (iii. 5); could *hunger* (xi. 12), *desire rest* (vi. 31), and *sleep* (iv. 38); could *sigh* (vii. 34), and *grieve* (vii. 34), and *groan* (vii. 34). Nay, the very *gestures* of our Lord are told us. We are told how He "took little children *into His arms*, and embraced them" (x. 16); how He "*sat down*, and called the Twelve to Him" (ix. 35). Special prominence is also given to the *looks* of our Lord. Thus St. Mark tells us how He "looked round about on the men in the synagogue with anger, being grieved for the blindness of their hearts" (iii. 5); how He "looked up to heaven" when He took the loaves and the fishes (vi. 41); also when He cured the deaf-mute (vii. 34); how He "turned about and looked on His disciples" (viii. 33); how He "looked on the young man, and loved him" (x. 21); how He "looked round upon all things" in the Temple (xi. 11). Again, St. Mark gives us special particulars as to number: he alone, for example, says that the cock crew *twice* before St. Peter's denial; that the Apostles were sent on their mission "*two and two*"; that at the Last Supper, when our Lord had announced that one of the Twelve would betray Him, they said to Him, "*one by one*," "Is it I, Lord?" and that the number of the swine which went headlong into the sea when the devils entered into them was "*about 2,000.*"

St. Mark's *style* is most vivid and crisp. There is not a word too much, and every word tells. He is fond of using the *direct* form of speech: for example, "Go out of the man, *thou* unclean spirit" (v. 8); "*Thou* deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee, go out of him, and enter not any more into him" (ix. 24). His narrative abounds

in phrases of *rapid transition*. The phrase "*and straight-way*," for example, occurs no less than twenty-seven times. The use of the vivid historic present is frequent, while broken and irregular constructions abound. He has a liking for the use of diminutives and accumulated negatives. Note, again, the picture drawn for us in very few words in the last two verses of chapter vi.: "And *running* through that *whole* country, they began to carry about *in beds* those that were sick, *where they heard* He was: and *whithersoever* He entered, into *towns*, or into *villages*, or into *cities*, they laid the sick *in the streets* and besought Him that they might touch but the *hem of His garment*; and as *many* as touched Him were made whole."

But of all the passages full of picturesque detail and deep meaning which abound in this Gospel, the most striking, perhaps, is the account of the cure of the lunatic boy in chapter ix. (16-26).

The *disciples* of our Lord have also a peculiar place in this Gospel. In common with the others, their call and education are carefully noted, but in St. Mark's narrative we are allowed to see more of the private and inner life of our Lord with the chosen Twelve, of how "when they were alone" with their Master they asked Him questions, and sought for instruction from Him. (Cp. iv. 10; iv. 34, 35; ix. 27; ix. 32-34; x. 10.) Lastly, St. Mark very strikingly notes the many *periods of retirement* on the part of our Lord in the midst of His active labours. For example, His withdrawals "to a desert place" after the early cures (i. 35); to "desert places" after the cleansing of the leper (i. 45); "to the sea" after healing the man with a withered hand (iii. 7); "to the villages round about" after His rejection at Nazareth (vi. 6); to "the coasts of Tyre and Sidon" after the opposition of the Pharisees (vii. 24); to the neighbourhood of Caesarea Philippi after the cure of the blind man (viii. 27); to Bethany after the triumphal entry into Jerusalem (xi. 11), and also after the cleansing of the Temple (xi. 19).

Thus the Gospel of St. Mark is "essentially a *transcript from life*." The course and issue of facts are imaged

in it with the clearest outline. If all other arguments against the mythic origin of the Gospel narratives were wanting, this vivid and simple record, stamped with the most distinct impress of independence and originality, totally unconnected with the symbolism of the Old Dispensation, totally independent of the deeper reasonings of the New, would be sufficient to refute a theory so subversive of all faith in history. The details which were originally addressed to the vigorous intelligence of Roman hearers are still full of instruction for us. The teaching of St. Mark's Gospel, which met their wants in the first age, finds a corresponding field for its action now." The careful student of St. Mark will assuredly end his task with a fuller knowledge of the "most beautiful among the children of men," of "Jesus of Nazareth, Whom God anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power," and "Who went about doing good."

MIRACLES OF OUR LORD RECORDED ONLY BY ST. MARK.

1. The deaf and dumb man (vii. 31-37).
2. The blind man at Bethsaida (viii. 22-26).

(St. Mark records 18 Miracles in all.)

PARABLES OF OUR LORD RECORDED ONLY BY ST. MARK.

The seed growing secretly (iv. 26-29).

(St. Mark records 4 Parables in all.)

ABBREVIATIONS

The sign = stands for " better translated."

Ap., App.,	stands for	Apostle or Apostles.
Apoc.	"	The Book of the Apocalypse.
Cant.	"	The Canticle of Canticles.
Col.	"	St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians.
Cor.	"	St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians.
Cp.	"	Compare.
Deut.	"	The Book of Deuteronomy.
Eccles.	"	The Book of Ecclesiastes.
Ecclus.	"	The Book of Ecclesiasticus.
Eph.	"	St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians.
Exod.	"	The Book of Exodus.
Ezech.	"	The Prophet Ezechiel.
Gal.	"	St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians.
Gen.	"	The Book of Genesis.
Heb.	"	St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews.
Is.	"	The Prophet Isaias.
Jer.	"	The Prophet Jeremias.
Jn.	"	The Gospel or Epistles of St. John.
Lam.	"	The Lamentations of the Prophet Jeremias.
Lev.	"	The Book of Leviticus.
Lit.	"	Literally.
Lk.	"	The Gospel of St. Luke.
Mach.	"	The Books of the Machabees.
Mal.	"	The Prophet Malachias.
Mich.	"	The Prophet Micheas.
Mk.	"	The Gospel of St. Mark.
Mt.	"	The Gospel of St. Matthew.
MSS.	"	Manuscripts.
N.T.	"	The New Testament.
Num.	"	The Book of Numbers.
O.T.	"	The Old Testament.
Paralip.	"	The Books of Paralipomenon.
Pet.	"	The Epistles of St. Peter.
Phil.	"	St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians.
Philem.	"	St. Paul's Epistle to Philemon.
Prov.	"	The Book of Proverbs.
Ps.	"	The Book of Psalms.
Rom.	"	St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans.
Thess.	"	St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians.
Tim.	"	St. Paul's Epistles to St. Timothy.
Tit.	"	St. Paul's Epistle to St. Titus.
Wisd.	"	The Book of Wisdom.
Zac.	"	The Prophet Zacharias.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION—PREACHING OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST—
THE BAPTISM AND TEMPTATION OF OUR LORD—THE
CALLING OF FOUR DISCIPLES—THE DEMONIAK IN THE
SYNAGOGUE OF CAPHARNAUM—THE HEALING OF ST.
PETER'S WIFE'S MOTHER—PREACHING IN GALILEE—
HEALING OF THE LEPER

THE beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of **I**
God.

As it is written in Isaias the prophet: Behold I send my **2**
angel before thy face. who shall prepare the way before
thee.

A voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare ye the way **3**
of the Lord, make straight his paths.

1. The gospel of Jesus Christ. This phrase is unique in the Gospels. Elsewhere we have "the Gospel of God," "the Gospel of the Kingdom," or simply, "the Gospel." The abruptness of the opening verse is remarkable; there is not a word about our Lord's infancy and early life; we plunge at once into "the fulness of his living energy," and find him already "going about doing good" (Acts x. 38).—**The Son of God.** St. Mark, writing for Gentiles, uses this term seven times. It represents exactly what he wished to prove concerning our Lord, and forms an addition necessary both for Jew and Gentile. St. Matthew, writing for Jews, calls him "the Son of David," for the most part. (Cp. Rom. i. 1-4.)

2. In Isaias. The words "Behold, I send," etc., come from Malachias (iii. 1); the words in verse 3, "the voice of one crying," etc., do come from Isaias (xl. 3). This is really the only quotation from the O.T. in Mk., for the passage in xv. 28 is wanting in the best MSS.

3. Make straight his paths. The imagery is taken from the journeys of Eastern kings and conquerors, who were accustomed thus to send heralds in advance to announce their coming, and

4 John was in the desert baptizing, and preaching the baptism of penance, unto the remission of sins.

5 And there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all they of Jerusalem, and were baptized by him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

bid them level the roads by which they were to travel. "Be comforted, be comforted, my people, saith your God"—so this passage begins—"speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem, and call to her, for her evil is come to an end, her iniquity is forgiven: she hath received of the hand of the Lord double for all her sins."

4. John was—"John arose"—made his appearance on the stage of history.—**In the desert.** This "desert" was the district embracing the southern portion of the deep Jordan valley and the barren steeps in which the mountains break down to the Dead Sea. Engedi was the most southerly town of this district. It was in the wilderness of Engedi that David had sought a retreat, and the same neighbourhood would naturally recommend itself to St. John, whose childhood had been spent in the hill-country of Judea, near Hebron. "It is a dreary waste of rocky valleys; in some parts stern and terrible, the rocks cleft and shattered by earthquakes and convulsions into rifts and gorges, sometimes a thousand feet in depth. The whole district is, in fact, the slope of the midland chalk and limestone hills, from their highest point of nearly 3,000 feet near Hebron to 1,000 feet at the valley of the Dead Sea."—**Baptizing**—*i.e.*, by immersion, to signify the complete inward cleansing of the subject. "Wash yourselves, be clean, take away the evil of your devices from my eyes, cease to do perversely" (Is. i. 16). Cp. *Ezech. xxxvi. 25*; *Ps. l. 2*.—**Preaching**—*i.e.*, proclaiming as a herald, officially, and with authority.—**The baptism of penance.** This was an external rite to signify the consciousness of sin for which the person was repentant, and his need of forgiveness. By "penance" is meant "change of life," and the words emphasize the special purpose and significance of St. John's baptism. Change of life had specially been insisted on by the Prophets as a necessary part of the preparation for the coming of our Lord. "A voice was heard in the highways, weeping and howling of the children of Israel: because they have made their way wicked: they have forgotten the Lord their God. Return, you rebellious children, and I will heal your rebellions" (*Jer. iii. 21, 22*). Cp. *Is. lviii. 1, 2*; *lix. 12, 13*.

5. Went out—were baptized. Both verbs are in the imperfect tense, denoting a continuous stream of people.—**All the country of Judea**—a strong expression, peculiar to Mk. Many classes of people were represented—Pharisees and Sadducees (*Mt. iii. 7*), tax-gatherers (*Lk. iii. 12*), soldiers (*Lk. iii. 14*), rich and poor (*Lk. iii. 10*). Since the days of Malachias

And John was clothed with camel's hair, and a leathern 6
girdle about his loins, and he ate locusts and wild honey!

And he preached, saying: There cometh after me one 7
mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not
worthy to stoop down and loose.

I baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you 8
with the Holy Ghost.

(B.C. 450) no "faithful prophet" had arisen in Israel, but the desire for such a one had never languished (cp. 1 Mach. iv. 46; xiv. 41). Moreover, at this time the minds of many were filled with the hope of the speedy coming of the Messias. Thus there was a great stir when St. John, "in the spirit and power of Elias," began his work.—**The Jordan.** This river rises in the southern spurs of Anti-Libanus, and, flowing southwards through the Sea of Galilee, at length falls into the Dead Sea, a little below Jericho, after a course of ninety miles. The name means "Descender," and is most appropriate, for the Jordan valley is the deepest cleft in the earth's surface. At its source, near Caesarea Philippi, the river is some 1,300 feet above the sea level; at the Sea of Galilee some 680 feet; while at the Dead Sea it is some 1,300 feet below the sea level.—**Confessing their sins**—a very real test of a purpose to change their life. Their baptism in the Jordan was by total immersion, and their confession would not be merely in general terms, but detailed—*e.g.*, the publicans of their extortions, the soldiers of their violence. There were no half measures with St. John.

6. **With camel's hair**—the traditional dress of a Prophet. Cp. the description of Elias in 4 Kings i. 8: "A hairy man, with a girdle of leather about his loins." St. John resembled Elias in the austerity of his dress and food, in his solitary life, and in his stern denunciation of sin. Indeed the crowd did not "go out to see a man clothed in soft garments" (Mt. xi. 8). Locusts were accounted "clean" food by the Jews (Lev. xi. 22), and were sometimes mixed with flour and water, and made into cakes. They are still eaten, prepared in various ways, by Eastern peoples. The "wild" or "mountain" honey was a product of the plain of Jericho.

7. **And he preached**—"he was proclaiming."—**There cometh.** Note the vivid present tense. The prophetic eye sees our Lord as already come, and standing in their midst.—**One mightier than I**—because whereas St. John baptized only with water, our Lord would baptize "with the Holy Ghost and with fire." (Cp. Jn. i. 15).—**The latchet**—diminutive of "latch," from the Latin *laqueus*, a noose. Here it means the thong by which the sandal was fastened to the foot. The duty of carrying or fastening the sandals of great people fell to the lowest slaves.

8. **I baptized.** Both Mt. and Lk. use the present tense. The past tense used by Mk. represents the words as having been

- 9 And it came to pass, in those days, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan.
- 10 And forthwith coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit as a dove, descending and remaining on him.
- 11 And there came a voice from Heaven: Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

spoken towards the close of St. John's ministry.—**With the Holy Ghost.** The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all men is spoken of throughout the Old Testament as a distinguishing mark of the coming of our Lord. "Behold my servant, I will uphold him: my elect, my soul delighteth in him: I have given my spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles" (Is. xlii. 1). "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me: he hath sent me to preach to the meek, to heal the contrite of heart, and to preach a release to the captives, and deliverance to them that are shut up" (Is. lxi. 1). "And it shall come to pass after this, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy: your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions: moreover upon my servants and handmaids in those days I will pour forth my spirit" (Joel ii. 28, 29). Thus St. John's declaration would seem quite natural to his Jewish hearers.

9. In those days—*i.e.*, when our Lord was thirty years old. The baptism of our Lord is also recorded by Mt. iii. 13, and Lk. iii. 21.—**Jesus came**, for the express purpose, as Mt. tells us.—**From Nazareth**—a town unknown and unnamed in the O.T. where our Lord had spent nearly thirty years, "increasing in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men" (Lk. ii. 52). This is the only place where Mk. makes mention of Nazareth. The addition "of Galilee" shows his Gospel to have been written for Gentile readers.—**In the Jordan**—"into the Jordan," with the added thought of *immersion*, which gives great vividness to the scene. The "out of" the water in verse 10 implies the same.

10. **The heavens opened**—"in the act of being riven asunder," or torn like a sheet of paper, or piece of cloth. (Cp. Acts. vii. 56.)—**As a dove.** Lk. adds "in a bodily shape." The dove was an emblem of simplicity. (Cp. Mt. x. 16.)—**Remaining on him**—peculiar to Mk. "The Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne shall rule them, and shall lead them to the fountains of the waters of life, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Apoc. vii. 17). "The bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax he shall not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth" (Is. xlii. 3).

11. **A voice from heaven.** In the Gospels the voice of the Father is heard three times: at our Lord's baptism, at the

And immediately the Spirit drove him out into the **12** desert.

And he was in the desert forty days and forty nights, **13** and was tempted by Satan: and he was with beasts, and the angels ministered to him.

And after that John was delivered up, Jesus came into **14** Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.

Transfiguration (cp. 2 Pet. i. 17), and at Jerusalem, just before the Passion (Jn. xii. 28).

12. And immediately. The frequent use of this phrase is a feature of St. Mark. It occurs ten times in this one chapter alone, and is used by Mk. nearly twice as often as by Mt. and Lk. together.—**Drove**—"drives," a vivid present. In Mt. and Lk. our Lord "is led" by the Spirit. Mk.'s word is much more forcible. The same words are used in Mt. ix. 38: "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he *send forth* labourers into his harvest."—**The desert.** This was probably the region of Mount Quarantania, a wild district north-west of Jericho. Mt. adds the purpose of our Lord's sojourn there: "to be tempted by the devil." Our Lord already was "in the desert," so the phrase must mean that he now retired into an even greater solitude.

13. Was tempted—"was being tempted all the time."—**Satan:** only in Mk. Mt. and Lk. have "the devil." The title occurs only once in Jn. (xiii. 27).—**He was with beasts**—a touch of St. Mark, emphasizing the loneliness of the place. The "beasts" would include the hyæna, the jackal, the leopard, the bear, the wolf, and possibly the lion.—**Ministered**—"kept on ministering to him all the time." Note that St. Mark gives no account of the actual temptations, or of our Lord's fast. The temptations recorded by Mt. and Lk. seem to have come towards the *end* of the forty days.

14. We must here insert before what is now to be narrated: (a) the miracle at Cana (Jn. ii. 1); (b) our Lord's first visit to Jerusalem, with the first cleansing of the Temple (Jn. ii. 13); (c) our Lord's return to Galilee, with the incident at Jacob's well (Jn. iv.).—**John was delivered up.** Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee and Peræa, had taken to wife Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, whilst the latter was still living. St. John rebuked him for this (cp. vi. 19), and was accordingly imprisoned by Herod in the Castle of Machaerus, N.E. of the Dead Sea.—**Jesus came.** This journey into Galilee was in fact a withdrawal from Jerusalem, where the tidings of St. John's imprisonment (Lk. iii. 19), and the growing jealousy of the Pharisees towards our Lord (Jn. iv. 1), made a longer stay unprofitable. We have now reached the beginning of our Lord's long ministry in Galilee, where He was welcomed in consequence of what He had done "in Jerusalem, on the festival day" (Jn. iv. 45).—**The Gospel**

- 15 And saying: The time is accomplished, the kingdom of God is at hand: repent, and believe the gospel.
- 16 And passing by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother, casting nets into the sea, for they were fishermen.
- 17 And Jesus said to them: Come after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.
- 18 And immediately leaving their nets, they followed him.

of the kingdom of God. Some MSS. have "the gospel of God," a phrase very frequent in St. Paul, and used also by St. Peter (1 Pet. iv. 17). Cp. Rom. i. 1; xv. 16; 2 Cor. xi. 7.—**Into Galilee.** Our Lord spent most of his public life in Galilee, a large industrial region, thickly populated, with many towns and villages, where he was more free from the molestation of the Jewish leaders, whose headquarters were at Jerusalem.

15. **The time**—"the opportune moment." (Cp. Gal. iv. 4; Mt. xvi. 3; Acts i. 7; Eccus. iii. 1-8.)—**The kingdom of God.** Mt. calls this "the kingdom of heaven." It invariably means the Church of Christ on earth. There are many indications of the term in the O.T., for a yearning for a Divine kingdom pervades the history of Israel. So the new preaching, in announcing its realization, found the phrase ready to hand, and familiar to all.—**Repent.** This is but a continuation of St. John's message.—**Believe the Gospel:** a unique expression in the N.T. Faith is usually directed to the person of whom the Gospel speaks. (Cp. Acts xx. 21; Heb. vi. 1.) Notice the four sharp phrases which make up this verse. (Cp. Eph. i. 13.)

16. **Simon and Andrew.** These two brothers came from Bethsaida, but resided at Capharnaum. Their father's name was John, or Jonas. Andrew (a Greek name) had been a disciple of St. John. Both had for some time past been associated with our Lord, and had seen his miracles both in Galilee and Jerusalem (cp. Jn. i. 35-43, and Jn. ii. 2, 7, 13, 23), but now they are called in a more intimate and special way.—**Casting nets.** The nets here spoken of, and in Mt. iv. 18, were "casting-nets," circular in shape, like the top of a tent. Other nets in use were the "drag-net," (Mt. xiii. 47, 48), and the "basket-net," (Lk. v. 4-9).

17. **And Jesus said.** Note that the two brothers are in their boat *on the water*, while our Lord speaks from the *shore*. He speaks, as it were, from the firm ground of eternity to men who are on the shifty waters of time. (Cp. Jn. xxi. 4, 5.)—**Fishers of men.** This is the first example of the use of parabolic language, so common in all the words of our Lord. Cp. Jer. xvi. 16: "Behold I will send many fishers, and they shall fish them: and after this I will send them many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks."

And going from thence a little farther, he saw James 19 the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were mending their nets in the ship.

And forthwith he called them. And leaving their 20 father Zebedee in the ship with his hired men, they followed him.

And they entered into Capharnaum, and forthwith 21 upon the sabbath day going into the synagogue, he taught them.

And they were astonished at his doctrine. For he was 22 teaching as one having power, and not as the scribes.

19. James—*i.e.*, St. James the Greater, who was afterwards slain by Herod with the sword (Acts xii. 2), being the first of the Apostles to shed his blood for our Lord.—John his brother—*i.e.*, St. John the beloved disciple, who wrote the 4th Gospel, three Epistles, and the Apocalypse. Zebedee, their father, was a man of some position and importance at Capharnaum. (Cp. Mt. iv. 21.) —Who also were mending their nets—peculiar to Mk.

20. With his hired men—peculiar to St. Mark.

21. Capharnaum was situated on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, and was of sufficient size to be always called a "city," with a synagogue of its own, in which our Lord frequently taught. There was a garrison of Roman soldiers quartered there, the centurion of which had built the synagogue (Lk. vii. 1); there was also a customs-house, for the great road from Damascus to the south ran through it, and duties were levied on the caravans of merchandise passing to Galilee and Judea. No trace of the city exists to-day. Mt. calls it our Lord's "own city" (ix. 1). —Upon the sabbath day—*i.e.*, on the very first Sabbath our Lord spent there.—To the synagogue. The synagogue-teaching of our Lord seems to be characteristic of the *earlier* part of his ministry. We hear no more of it after St. Mark vi. 2. (On the Synagogue, see Appendix 4.)—He taught them. Cp. Lk. iv. 16-30; Acts xiii. 15; 1 Cor. xiv. 30. Teaching was a chief purpose of the synagogues. Selections from the Law and the Prophets were first read, and then some competent person would be called upon for an exposition of what had been read.

22. Astonished—"filled with amazement"—a strong word, frequent in Mk.—Authority. The frequenters of the synagogue were chiefly struck by our Lord's tone of authority. He did not appeal to other Rabbis, greater or older than himself. His message came direct from God.—Not as the scribes. The Scribes first came into prominence in the time of Esdras, and lasted properly only until the death of Simon "the Just," B.C. 300. Their duty was to copy, read, study, and explain the law, and to fence it round with "the tradition of the Elders." In the N.T. they are sometimes called "lawyers," (Mt. xxii. 35),

- 23 And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit: and he cried out,
 24 Saying: What have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know who thou art, the Holy One of God.
 25 And Jesus threatened him saying: Speak no more, and go out of the man.
 26 And the unclean spirit tearing him, and crying out with a loud voice, went out of him.
 27 And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying: What thing is this? what is this new doctrine? for with power he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.
 28 And the fame of him was spread forthwith into all the country of Galilee.

or "doctors of the Law" (Lk. v. 17). "They were a dominant factor in Jewish life, the recognized teachers of Israel, taking their place in the Sanhedrim with the representatives of priesthood and people." (Cp. Mk. xv. 1.) As to how the Scribes taught, we learn from our Lord's severe words in their regard. "They say, and do not" (cp. Mt. xxiii. 4-7). (See Appendix, 2.)

23. Cried out. This miracle is also recorded in Lk. (iv. 31), who adds: "with a great voice."

24. What have we to do with thee?—"what have we in common with thee."—Art thou come to destroy us? This need not be a question. We may read: "Thou art come to destroy us," for he had "come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Cp. Lk. ix. 56, and xix. 10.)—The holy one of God. Cp. Jn. x. 36; Acts iv. 30.

25. Threatened—"rebuked" him. Cp. the conduct of St. Paul in Acts xvi. 16.—Speak no more—"be muzzled."

26. Tearing—*i.e.*, throwing him into strong convulsions. Lk. adds: "into the midst," before all.—Went out of him. Lk. adds: "and hurt him not at all."

27. Amazed—a strong word, used only by Mk. in N.T. Notice the sharp and excited questions recorded in this verse, telling of the effect produced by our Lord's miracle.—New doctrine—"new teaching."—For with power he commandeth. The words "with power" are emphatic: it was not merely that our Lord had cast out the evil spirit, but that he had done so with such ease and power, in striking contrast with the laborious efforts of the Jewish exorcists. (Cp. Mt. xii. 27.)

28. Forthwith—"forthwith everywhere"—a combination truly Marcan.

And immediately going out of the synagogue they **29** came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

And Simon's wife's mother lay in a fit of a fever: **30** and forthwith they tell him of her.

And coming up to her, he lifted her up, taking her by **31** the hand: and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

And when it was evening, after sunset, they brought **32** to him all that were ill, and that were possessed with devils.

And all the city was gathered together at the door. **33**

29. This miracle is recorded also by Mt. (viii. 14), and Lk. (iv. 38). The narrative is still unbroken: we pass quickly from one miracle to another.—**And immediately.** The characteristic use of this word still continues. It was our Lord's almost invariable custom thus to withdraw from public notice after working some striking miracle.

30. Lay—"lay prostrate"—a medical term. St. Peter's wife seems later on to have accompanied him in some of his apostolic journeys. (Cp. 1 Cor. ix. 5.)—**Fever:** Lk. calls it "a great fever." Fevers were classed as "great" and "small" in these times.—**They tell him of her.** Who are these that inform our Lord of her state? No mention is made of servants: doubtless it was the disciples, who had just seen one deed of power, and seemed to have almost a right to suggest another to their Master.

31. She ministered unto them—thus showing the completeness of the miracle. Not only had the fever left her, but no trace of weakness clung to her. Observe the many graphic touches in this verse, clearly supplied by St. Peter, an eyewitness of the scene, and with the whole narrative compare Acts xxviii. 8.

32. After sunset—*i.e.*, when the Sabbath, which ended with the sunset, was over. All three Evangelists are careful to record this detail, for it would not be lawful to carry the sick about on the Sabbath-day. (Cp. Jn. v. 9-16.) Clearly the rumour of the healing of St. Peter's mother-in-law and the miracle in the synagogue had quickly spread.—**They brought**—"they kept on bringing"—case after case was presented to our Lord.

33. At the door—"right up to the door." The Greek verb for "gathered" implies an unusually large assembly of people, and the whole verse gives a picture of eagerness to get near to our Lord, and of the excitement of the crowd, quite in St. Mark's style. Mt. connects it with a prophecy of Isaiah: "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases" (Is. liii. 4). The door was of course the door of St. Peter's house.

- 34 And he healed many that were troubled with divers diseases; and he cast out many devils, and he suffered them not to speak, because they knew him.
- 35 And rising very early, and going out, he went into a desert place, and there he prayed.
- 36 And Simon, and they that were with him, followed after him,
- 37 And when they had found him, they said to him: All seek for thee.
- 38 And he saith to them: Let us go into the neighbouring

34. **He healed many.** "Many" is probably coextensive with "all." Our Lord healed all who needed his care, and they were "many" in number. Lk. adds the method adopted by our Lord: "laying his hands on every one of them."—**He suffered them not to speak.** They did speak, as Lk. tells us, and declared our Lord to be the Son of God. Mk. merely means that our Lord silenced them, for he needed not their testimony, and desired to become known to men gradually, and by the power of his deeds and words. Cp. St. Paul's action in the case of the girl possessed by a pythonical spirit at Philippi (Acts xvi. 17, 18).

35. **Very early**—"very early, while it was yet night"—a piece of intimate acquaintance with the facts of the case. Cp. Ps. lxxxvii. 14: "In the morning, O Lord, my prayer shall prevent thee." The Greek literally means "very much at night," and the reference is to the last watch of the night from 3 a.m. to 6 a.m., and to a point of time quite early in this particular watch.—**Into a desert place.** "A remarkable feature of the Lake of Gennesaret was the concentration of varied life and activity in a basin so closely surrounded with desert solitudes. It was these desert places, thus close at hand, on the table-lands or in the ravines of the eastern and western ranges, which seem to be classed under the common name of 'the mountain,' that gave the opportunities of retirement for rest or prayer" (Stanley: "Sinai and Palestine," p. 379).—**He prayed**—"he continued in prayer." The Evangelists represent our Lord at prayer before all his works of chief moment—*e.g.*, before the election of the Apostles, before bestowing the primacy on St. Peter, before the Sacred Passion.

36. **Followed after**—"pursued him closely." The verb usually bears a hostile sense, but here vividly portrays St. Peter's distress at even a momentary loss of our Lord, and his keenness to find him again. It occurs only here in N.T. By "they that were with him" are meant Andrew, James, and John.

37. **All men seek for thee**—words peculiar to Mk., showing our Lord already as a centre of attraction to all. (Cp. Jn. vi. 24, 26.)

38. **Towns and cities**—"cities and villages." The Greek word for "villages" implies the *larger* villages of the neighbour-

towns and cities, that I may preach there also; for to this purpose am I come.

And he was preaching in their synagogues, and in all Galilee, and casting out devils. 39

And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down said to him: If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. 40

And Jesus, having compassion on him, stretched forth his hand; and touching him, saith to him: I will. Be thou made clean. 41

And when he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was made clean. 42

hood, and occurs only here in N.T.—**To this purpose**—very emphatic, as though our Lord said: “I am come to preach, rather than to work miracles.” (Cp. Is. lxi. 1.) “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me, and hath sent me to *preach* to the meek, to heal the contrite of heart, and to *preach* a release to the captives, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” (Cp. Lk. iv. 43.)—**Am I come** = “am I come forth”—*i.e.*, from the Father into the world. “I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and I go to the Father” (Jn. xvi. 28). (Cp. Jn. viii. 42.)

39. In all Galilee. Notice the absence of the actual names of places—quite a feature of this Gospel.—**Casting out devils.** Notice how strongly and repeatedly Mk. in this chapter has emphasized this feature of our Lord’s work.

40. **There came** = “there cometh,” a vivid present. This miracle is also recorded by Mt. (viii. 2) and Lk. (v. 12). Lepers were numerous in Palestine in our Lord’s day. (Cp. Mt. x. 8; Lk. xvii. 12.)—**To him** = “close to him.” The nearness of the approach is remarkable, for lepers were excluded from all society, and even from cities. “All the time that he is a leper, and unclean, he shall dwell alone without the camp” (Lev. xiii. 46). “We have thought him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted” (Is. liii. 4).—**Kneeling down**—peculiar to Mk. Lk. has “falling on his face.” All three Evangelists make the leper say: “If thou wilt.”

41. **Touching him.** It was forbidden to touch a leper as being a thing unclean, but our Lord thus asserted his superiority over the Jewish law. The Apostles recalled to mind this act of their Master in working “signs and wonders.” (Cp. Acts iv. 30.)—**I will: be thou made clean.** Note the brevity and emphasis of the two phrases. “Be cleansed at once, and completely.”

- 43 And he strictly charged him, and forthwith sent him away.
- 44 And he saith to him: See thou tell no one; but go, shew thyself to the high-priest, and offer for thy cleansing the things that Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.
- 45 But he being gone out, began to publish and to blaze abroad the word: so that he could not openly go into the city, but was without in desert places: and they flocked to him from all sides.

43. Charged—"sternly admonished." The Greek word implies great depth of feeling and earnestness in the speaker. It is twice used of our Lord himself in Jn. xi. 33, 38, and there rendered "groaning in himself." Mk. alone records this stern and somewhat abrupt dismissal of the leper by our Lord.

44. The things that Moses commanded: The whole rite for the cleansing of a leper is fully described in Lev. xiv. On the eighth day of the ceremony, the leper was to offer "two lambs without blemish, and an ewe of a year old without blemish, and three-tenths of flour tempered with oil for a sacrifice, and a sextary of oil apart." Special regulations applied for the offerings of lepers that were "poor" and "whose hands could not find the things aforesaid."—For a testimony to them—"for a testimony against them." Our Lord at once shows his reverence for the Old Law which was not yet abrogated, and calls for belief in his claims from those who despised and rejected him.

45. To publish—"often" or "much" should be supplied. —They flocked to him from all sides—a striking phrase, portraying our Lord as a centre of attraction. Lk. (v. 15) has: "they came together to hear and to be healed of their infirmities." The intervals were spent in prayer.

CHAPTER II

OUR LORD HEALS THE MAN SICK OF THE Palsy—THE
CALL OF AN APOSTLE FROM A LIFE OF SIN—OUR
LORD'S FIRST CONFLICTS WITH HIS ENEMIES:
(a) WHY DO NOT HIS DISCIPLES FAST? (b) WHY DO
THEY BREAK THE SABBATH?

AND again he entered into Capharnaum after some days. **1**

And it was heard that he was in the house, and many **2**
came together, so that there was no room: no, not even
at the door; and he spoke to them the word.

And they came to him, bringing one sick of the palsy, **3**
who was carried by four.

And when they could not offer him unto him for the **4**
multitude, they uncovered the roof where he was: and
opening it, they let down the bed wherein the man sick
of the palsy lay.

1. And again. It is a part of the vividness of St. Mark's style and narrative thus to record the recurrence of scenes and places. Lk. uses the Greek word for "again" only twice, while Mk. employs it mainly to mark the different points of a discourse. —Capharnaum—"his own city" (Mt.).—After some days. The interval must have been considerable to allow of such extensive journeyings and preachings. (Cp. i. 39.)

2. He was in the house—"he is at home"—a vivid present. The house was probably that of St. Peter.—No room, no, not even at the door—a touch of St. Mark.—No room—"no longer any room," for so many had crowded in.—He spoke—"he continued to speak."

3. They came to him—"they come to him"—a vivid present. —Who was carried by four—a touch of St. Mark. This miracle is also recorded by Mt. (ix. 1) and Lk. (v. 17). According to Lk., the witnesses of this miracle included "Pharisees and doctors of the Law, who were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem."

4. Uncovered the roof. Houses in the East have flat roofs, and are approached by a staircase from the outside. The roofs are made by laying flat stones, or slabs of tile, or dried clay, on the top of which earth or gravel is rolled hard and flat. The room was probably an upper chamber, which often extended over the whole area of the house. (Cp. Acts i. 13; ix. 37; xx. 8.)—Opening it—"digging it out."

- 5 And when Jesus had seen their faith, he saith to the sick of the palsy: Son, thy sins are forgiven thee.
- 6 And there were some of the Scribes sitting there, and thinking in their hearts:
- 7 Why doth this man speak thus? he blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins, but God only?
- 8 Which Jesus presently knowing in his spirit, that they so thought within themselves, saith to them: Why think you these things in your hearts?
- 9 Which is easier, to say to the sick of the palsy: Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say: Arise, take up thy bed, and walk?
- 10 But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)

5. Their faith—*i.e.*, the faith not only of the bearers, but also of the paralytic himself.—Son="My child." The word in the Greek is one expressive of great tenderness and affection.—Are forgiven="are being forgiven at this moment"—a vivid present, as though "the handwriting against him was being blotted out" before our Lord's eyes.

6. The Scribes. These, as we learn from iii. 22, had mostly come down from Jerusalem, to watch our Lord, and dog his steps. They were "sitting," probably in the place of honour close to our Lord.—Thinking in their hearts—and our Lord could read those hearts, for "the searcher of hearts and reins is God" (Ps. vii. 10). Cp. Jer. xvii. 10: "I am the Lord who search the heart, and prove the reins, who give to every one according to his way, and according to the fruit of his devices."

7. This man="this fellow." The words were spoken in contempt.—He blasphemeth. And therefore "let him be stoned." (Cp. Jn. x. 33; Acts vii. 57.)

8. Presently="at once." — Knowing="knowing well." (Cp. 1 Cor. xiii. 12.)—They so thought="they are thus reasoning"—a vivid present. They usually kept their bad and hostile thoughts to themselves.—In your hearts. "The heart, as the centre of the personal life, is the sphere not only of the passions and emotions, but of the thoughts and intellectual processes, so far as these go to make up the moral character."

9. Easier to say. The emphasis is on "say." It is easier to say "thy sins are forgiven thee" than to say, "arise and walk," because the effect of the words cannot be seen and tested.

10. The Son of man. The phrase is here used for the first time in the Gospel narrative. It is our Lord's favourite title for himself, and occurs fourteen times in this Gospel. The title originated in Daniel (vii. 13): "I beheld, therefore, in the vision

I say to thee: Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy **11** house.

And immediately he arose; and taking up his bed, **12** went his way in the sight of all: so that all wondered and glorified God, saying: We never saw the like.

And he went forth again to the sea side; and all the **13** multitude came to him, and he taught them.

And when he was passing by, he saw Levi the son of **14** Alpheus sitting at the receipt of custom; and he saith to him: Follow me. And rising up, he followed him.

of the night, and lo, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and he came even to the Ancient of days, and they presented him before him: and he gave him power, and glory, and a kingdom, and all peoples, tribes, and tongues shall serve him: his power is an everlasting power that shall not be taken away: and his kingdom shall not be destroyed."—On earth, in contrast to an implied "in heaven."

12. In the sight of all—a touch of St. Mark. That the man was able to do this was a proof of his complete cure. The bed would be a portable pallet, little more than a mat, and used by the very poor. (Cp. Acts v. 15; ix. 33.)—**All wondered**—"all were beside themselves with astonishment."—**Glorified God.** According to Lk., it was the paralytic who set them the example of so doing.—**We never saw the like**—peculiar to Mk. Lk. has: "We have seen wonderful things to-day."

13. And again. Cp. note on verse 1. The only previous event by the Lake had been the call of the four disciples (i. 16).—**Came to him, and he taught them.** Both verbs are in the imperfect, denoting a continuous stream of visitors to our Lord, who never wearied of instructing the ignorant. Only Mk. records the teaching by the sea-shore on this occasion.

14. Levi, the son of Alpheus—so only in Mk. This was St. Matthew. It was quite usual with the Jews to have two names. It is noticeable that Mk. and Lk. in their charity do not call him "Matthew" here, or say anything to identify him with a discreditable past, whereas St. Matthew, in his humility, not only calls himself "Matthew" in the account of his calling, but, in his enumeration of the Apostles, styles himself, "Matthew the publican" (Mt. ix. 9; Lk. v. 27).—**The son of Alpheus**—peculiar to Mk.—**At the receipt of custom.** The customs of the Roman Government (and Palestine was now under Rome) were first farmed out at Rome to members of the Equestrian order, and secondly, subfarmed by these to local agents called *publicans*. The tax in itself was hateful to the Jews, as being a tribute to their Roman conquerors: and besides, the publicans were mostly men of low station and bad character, who used their office as an opportunity for fraud and extortion.—**Rising up.**

- 15 And it came to pass, that as he sat at meat in his house many publicans and sinners sat down together with Jesus and his disciples. For they were many, who also followed him.
- 16 And the Scribes and Pharisees, seeing that he ate with publicans and sinners, said to his disciples: Why doth your Master eat and drink with publicans and sinners?
- 17 Jesus hearing this, saith to them: They that are well have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. For I came not to call the just, but sinners.

Lk. adds: "leaving all things absolutely." Fishermen could return to their trade after being called by our Lord (cp. Jn. xxi. 3); not so a tax-gatherer.

15. In his house—*i.e.*, in St. Matthew's. "Levi made him a great feast in his own house" (Lk. v. 29).—Sinners. The word is used in a broad sense of those who were not Pharisees. In the East it was the custom to keep open house, so that all might enter in, and take their place at table who cared to do so. The publicans here alluded to were distinctly the inferior tax-gatherers, natives of the province where the taxes were collected, and were properly called *portitores*.—They were many, but not necessarily all friendly to our Lord. Several may have followed from motives of curiosity or hostility. This remark is peculiar to Mk., who loves to portray the fruit and efficacy of our Lord's teaching.

16. Said to his disciples—*i.e.*, they talked *at* our Lord through his disciples. Had they reflected on their Scriptures, they would have seen in this very fact a proof that our Lord was the Messiah. "Return, you rebellious children, and I will heal your rebellions. Behold we come to thee, for thou art the Lord our God" (Jer. iii. 22). "Say to them that are bound: Come forth: and to them that are in darkness: Shew yourselves. They shall not hunger, nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor the sun strike them: for he that is merciful to them shall be their shepherd, and at the fountains of waters he shall give them drink" (Is. xlix. 9, 10). Cp. Ezech. xxxvi. 25-28.

17. For I came. Omit the word "for." The "I" is emphatic by position.—But sinners. Lk. adds "to penance," while Mt. makes our Lord quote a passage from Osee (vi. 6): "Go then and learn what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice." "All have sinned and do need the glory of God," says St. Paul (Rom. iii. 23), and "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 Jn. i. 8). There are none who do not need the Divine Physician: our Lord was, of course, here speaking ironically to expose the self-righteousness of the Pharisees.

And the disciples of John and the Pharisees used to fast; and they come and say to him: Why do the disciples of John and the Pharisees fast; but thy disciples do not fast?

And Jesus saith to them: Can the children of the marriage fast, as long as the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them; and then they shall fast in those days.

18. Used to fast. Lk. (v. 33) adds: "and make prayers." It is quite possible that St. Matthew made his "great feast" for our Lord on a Monday or a Thursday, on which days it was customary for the stricter Jews to fast. If this be so, the question put to our Lord is of the nature of a protest against his disciples breaking the Law. The Law required abstinence only on the Day of Atonement, but fasts had been greatly multiplied. The Pharisee, in the parable of the Pharisee and Publican, says: "I fast twice in the week" (Lk. xviii. 12). (On the Pharisees, see Appendix 1.)

19. Children of the marriage—*i.e.*, the wedding guests.—The bridegroom. St. John the Baptist (Jn. iii. 29) had called our Lord "the Bridegroom" of his people, and so our Lord would here remind St. John's disciples of this testimony to him from their own master.

20. But the days. Omit the article, and read: "But days"—which adds great solemnity to the utterance.—The bridegroom. Thus does our Lord identify himself with the Bridegroom predicted in Osee (ii. 21): "I will espouse thee to me for ever: I will espouse thee to me in justice, and judgment, and in mercy, and in commiserations. And I will espouse thee to me in faith, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord." Cp. Mt. (xxv. 1); Jn. (iii. 28); Eph. (v. 25-27); Apoc. (xix. 7). So, too, the Jewish people, by reason of the greatness of their call and privilege, are spoken of under the same figure: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, and with the robe of justice he hath covered me, as a bridegroom decked with a crown, and as a bride adorned with her jewels" (Is. lxi. 10).

—Taken away. The Greek word here used points to a death by violence, and thus this verse contains a first prediction (as it were, a hint) of the Sacred Passion. The same phrase occurs in Is. liii. 8 as a prophecy of the Passion: "He is cut off out of the land of the living."—Then shall they fast—*i.e.*, gladly, and in the true spirit. The Lenten fast has always been specially connected with these words of our Lord.—In those

- 21** No man seweth a piece of raw cloth to an old garment: otherwise the new piecing taketh away from the old, and there is made a greater rent.
- 22** And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: otherwise the wine will burst the bottles, and both the wine will be spilled, and the bottles will be lost. But new wine must be put into new bottles.
- 23** And it came to pass again, as the Lord walked through the cornfields on the sabbath, that his disciples began to go forward, and to pluck the ears of corn.
- 24** And the Pharisees said to him: Behold why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?

days. Note the pathos and emphasis in these words. The future is in our Lord's mind, as he speaks them. He himself is "a sign that shall be contradicted," and the time will come to his disciples when "whosoever killeth them will think that he doth a service to God" (Jn. xvi. 2). "Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice: and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy" (*ib.* 20).

21. Raw cloth to an old garment—new wine into old bottles. Under both similitudes our Lord declares the same profound truth. By the "raw cloth" and the "new wine" are meant the "new life," which he came to bring into the world, and which could not be breathed into the worn-out system of observances to which Jewish formalism had reduced the Mosaic dispensation. Our Lord makes all things "new," and has given us "a new heavens and a new earth" as our portion. These similitudes occur also in Mt. (ix. 16) and Lk. (v. 36). The 14th chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans furnishes an excellent and practical commentary on these words of our Lord.

22. Put into new bottles. Lk. adds: "and both are preserved." The brevity of Mk. in both verses is remarkable. We must "purge out the old leaven if we would become a new paste" (1 Cor. v. 7). Cp. Gal. iii. 3; Col. ii. 20-23.

23. And again—i.e., on another occasion. Cp. note on verse 1. This incident is also recorded in Mt. (xii. 1) and Lk. (vi. 1).
—His disciples. Mt. says they were hungry. Their act marks the season of the year. The wheat was ripe, or they would not have rubbed it in their hands, and the time was a week or so after the Passover, when the first ripe sheaf was offered as the first-fruits of the harvest. Our Lord had been to Jerusalem for this Feast, and had there healed the man at the Probatic Pool (Jn. v. 1-47). The fields spoken of were probably in the neighbourhood of Capharnaum.—**To go forward—i.e., to make a way** where there was none, through the blades of standing corn.—**Pluck the ears.**—Lk. adds: "rubbing them with their hands."

And he said to them: Have you never read what David **25** did when he had need, and was hungry himself and they that were with him?

How he went into the house of God, under Abiathar **26** the high-priest and did eat the loaves of proposition, which was not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave to them who were with him.

And he said to them: The sabbath was made for man, **27** and not man for the sabbath.

Therefore the Son of man is Lord of the sabbath also. **28**

Permission to pluck and eat ears of standing corn was given by the Law, provided that no instrument, such as a sickle, was used (Deut. xxiii. 25). To "rub them with the hand" is specially mentioned as being allowed. But Exodus (xxxiv. 21) forbade all ploughing and reaping on the Sabbath, and the Rabbis said that plucking and rubbing the corn was a kind of reaping and thrashing, and so took scandal at the action of the disciples.

25. What David did. Our Lord's reply, couched in words of gentle irony, is an appeal for fair play. If they find fault with his followers, let them find far greater fault with David. The story is related in 1 Kings xxi. 1-6. David, still an outlaw, was at Nob, not far from Jerusalem, and to him "the priest gave hallowed bread, for there was no bread there, but only the loaves of proposition, which had been taken away from before the face of the Lord, that hot loaves might be set up." The loaves of proposition were twelve loaves placed on a golden table in the Temple before the Holy of Holies. They were renewed every week, on the Sabbath, and when thus removed could only be eaten by the priests. As the high-priest had the loaves in his hand when David asked for them, it looks very much as though he had just been changing them, so that the day in question was the Sabbath. If so, our Lord's comparison is the more forcible. His words about David "being hungry and having need" are an inference from the history, and are added to complete the parallel.

26. Abiathar the high-priest. The high-priest was really Abimelech, the father of Abiathar. The difficulty is explained by saying (*a*) that the more famous name is recorded, (*b*) that Abiathar was coadjutor with his father, (*c*) that Abiathar may well have been the principal agent in allowing him to take the loaves. The clause is peculiar to Mk.

28. Therefore the Son of man is Lord of the sabbath. The sequence of the thought and the argument are made specially clear in St. Mark. "Since the Sabbath is made for man, it is subject to the control of the ideal and representative Man to whom it belongs. This Man is our Lord, the Head of the Race, and he must therefore have the power of a master over the

CHAPTER III

CURE OF THE MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND—FIRST IDEA OF DESTROYING OUR LORD—SPREAD OF OUR LORD'S FAME, SO THAT PEOPLE CAME TO HIM EVEN FROM IDUMEA—INCREASE OF THE APOSTOLIC COLLEGE—OUR LORD IS CHARGED WITH WORKING MIRACLES BY BEELZEBUB.—HIS COUNTER-CHARGE OF THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST—OUR LORD SOUGHT FOR BY OUR LADY—FIRST LESSON IN DETACHMENT

- 1 AND he entered again into the synagogue, and there was a man who had a withered hand.
- 2 And they watched him whether he would heal on the sabbath days: that they might accuse him.
- 3 And he said to the man who had the withered hand: Stand up in the midst.
- 4 And he saith to them: Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy? But they held their peace.

Sabbath, and be able to regulate its observance, and give it a beneficial form and spirit." "There is one God and one Mediator of God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5). "The first man was of the earth, earthy: the Second Man from heaven, heavenly" (1 Cor. xv. 47).

1. Into the synagogue. Our Lord is still at Capharnaum. "Again"—*i.e.*, probably on another Sabbath day. This miracle is also recorded by Mt. (xii. 9) and Lk. (vi. 6). The narrative of Mk. is specially vivid and pictorial.—A withered hand—*i.e.*, a hand thoroughly dried up. Lk. adds that it was his right hand.

2. They watched him—"they were watching him." According to the Rabbinical rule, relief might be given to a sufferer on the Sabbath only when life was in danger. This was not the case here, so there was good prospect of getting material for a charge against our Lord. (Cp. Lk. xx. 20.)

3. In the midst. Lk. has: "Arise, and stand forth into the midst." Our Lord proceeds to anticipate their question.

4. To do good on the sabbath days. According to Mt. they had pointedly asked our Lord the question: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" Our Lord changes "to heal" into "to do good," and then goes further by asking them a second

And looking round about on them with anger, being 5
grieved for the blindness of their hearts, he saith to the
man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it
forth: and his hand was restored unto him.

And the Pharisees going out, immediately made a 6
consultation with the Herodians against him, how they
might destroy him.

question which fairly put them to shame, and showed how fully
he read their thoughts. "Is it lawful," he added "to save
life, or to destroy?" Whose life was he alluding to? To his
own, of course. Practically our Lord said to them: "You are
trying to prevent me from doing a good deed on the Sabbath day,
at the same time that you yourselves are doing evil by plotting
my death on the Sabbath day. You hypocrites! You are
ready enough to kill me on the Sabbath day, but I forsooth
must not heal the suffering on that day." No wonder they
held their peace—a detail given only by Mk.

5. **Looking round.** The Greek word, with one exception, is
used only by Mk., who uses it six times. In five cases out of six
it is used in reference to a quick, searching glance round the
circle of friends or enemies, which St. Peter would clearly re-
member as characteristic of our Lord. "The looks of Christ may
teach us many things."—**Being grieved for the blindness of their
hearts**—a touch of St. Mark, as also are the words "with anger."
(Cp. Eph. iv. 30.) The Greek word for "grieved" occurs only
here in N.T.—**Blindness.** The word used is a medical one, to
denote the formation of the hard substance which unites the
fractured ends of a broken bone. Hence "hardness" would
be a better translation. (Cp. Jn. xii. 40.)—**Stretch forth thy
hand.** Obedience to this command would cost the man a great
deal. Those who suffer from withered limbs never like to
show them. But, as in the case of the paralytic, recovery
comes through faith and obedience.—**Restored to him.** Mt.
adds: "even as the other." This miracle is one of seven
worked by our Lord on the Sabbath day. The other six are:
(1) The demoniac at Capharnaum (Mk. i. 21); (2) Simon's wife's
mother (Mk. i. 29); (3) the impotent man at the pool of Beth-
saida (Jn. v. 9); (4) the woman with a spirit of infirmity (Lk.
xiii. 14); (5) the man who had the dropsy (Lk. xiv. 1); (6) the
man born blind (Jn. ix. 14).

6. **Made a consultation.** While Lk. here speaks only of a
private and informal talk as to what had best be done to our
Lord, Mk. uses a strong phrase, descriptive of a determined,
vigorous consultation. Our Lord must certainly die, and the
sooner the better—such is their thought and purpose. On this
they were all agreed; the only question was *how* this could best
be accomplished.—**How they might destroy him.** What a
justification of our Lord's recent question to them! Lk. adds:

- 7 But Jesus retired with his disciples to the sea; and a great multitude followed him from Galilee and Judea.
- 8 And from Jerusalem, and Idumea, and from beyond the Jordan. And they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, hearing the things which he did, came to him.
- 9 And he spoke to his disciples that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him.
- 10 For he healed many, so that they pressed upon him for to touch him as many as had evils.

"they were filled with madness." So early have they begun to plan our Lord's death!—**With the Herodians**—peculiar to Mk. (On the Herodians, see Appendix, 3.)

7. Jesus retired, "for his hour was not yet come." The Greek word is specially used of retiring from danger. Mt. emphasizes this by adding: "Jesus knowing it, retired" (xii. 15). Moreover, "it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem" (Lk. xiii. 33). Our Lord may also have wished to give his enemies time for thought and repentance. Cp. Mt. iv. 12; Lk. iv. 29, 30; Jn. viii. 59; Jn. xii. 36.

8. Idumea. This is the only place in N.T. where this country is mentioned. In our Lord's time, it was practically a part of Judea, with a Jewish population.—**Beyond the Jordan**—i.e., from Peraea on the East of the Jordan. Notice the enormous tract of country covered by this verse. It includes practically the whole of Palestine.—**They about Tyre and Sidon**—two celebrated towns of Phoenicia. Ezechiel (xxvii.) gives a wonderful description of the glory and wealth of Tyre, and of her ultimate downfall: "What city is like Tyre, which is become silent in the midst of the sea, which by thy merchandise that went from thee by sea didst fill many people, which by the multitude of thy riches and of thy people didst enrich the kings of the earth?" Sidon, the capital of Phoenicia, had a very chequered history. At the time of our Lord it was under the Roman sway, and very thriving, with extensive manufactories of glass. Isaias (xxiii.) prophesies the downfall of these two cities, and our Lord alludes to their wickedness in Mt. xi. 21 and Lk. x. 13. "The burden of Tyre: howl ye ships of the sea, for the house is destroyed, from whence they were wont to come: be thou ashamed, O Sidon, thou shalt glory no more: and thou, O Tyre, shalt be forgotten" (Is. xxiii.).—**Which he did**="which he is doing," a vivid present. Lk. adds that the fame and power of our Lord's preaching also was an attraction to many.

9. Should wait on him="should be in constant attendance." This picturesque verse is peculiar to Mk.

10. Notice the vigour and strength of this verse and of verse 11, portraying our Lord as the wonder-worker, busily occupied at

And the unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down **11** before him: and they cried, saying:

Thou art the Son of God. And he strictly charged **12** them that they should not make him known.

And going up into a mountain, he called unto him **13** whom he would himself: and they came to him.

And he made that twelve should be with him, and that **14** he might send them to preach.

every moment. Clearly they are written from the account of an eye-witness.—So that they pressed upon him: Lit., “So that they fell upon him.” The enthusiasm of the crowd was positively dangerous.—To touch him. Experience had taught them that this was usually a concomitant of being healed by our Lord. By “evils” any disease of the body is meant.

11. When they saw him = “whenever they saw him.”—**And they cried** = “and they shrieked out.” The Greek verb is also used in i. 23; v. 5, 7; ix. 25, of the wild and painful cry of the demoniacs. Both “fell” and “cried” are in the imperfect tense, denoting repeated action.

12. Strictly = “strongly” or “repeatedly.”—**That they should not make him known.** Mt. here quotes a passage from Isaias (xlii. 1) which beautifully gives our Lord’s reason for this: “Behold my servant whom I have chosen, My beloved in whom my soul hath been well pleased. I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not contend, nor cry out, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. The bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax he shall not extinguish, till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name the Gentiles shall hope.”

13. Going up = “he goes up”—a vivid present.—**A mountain.** According to tradition, this was the Horn of Hattin, a double-peaked mountain behind Capharnaum. Lk. gives us the purpose of the journey: it was “to pray.” “And he passed the whole night in the prayer of God” (Lk. vi. 12).—**Whom he would himself**—only in Mk. do we find this telling phrase. (Cp. Jn. vi. 71; xv. 16.) For “neither doth any man take the honour to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was” (Heb. v. 4).—**They came to him.** This was more than a mere “going” to our Lord. Sacrifice and self-consecration are implied in the word, and we may translate: “they offered themselves willingly to him,” thus “leaving all things,” and finally parting with the surroundings of their previous life.

14. He made = “he directed,” or “he appointed.”—**Twelve.** The number has reference to the tribes of Israel, and also suggests the *relation* of the Apostles to the larger and world-wide Israel—i.e., that they were to “sit on thrones” as patriarchs and princes of the New Kingdom. (Cp. Lk. xxii. 30; Apoc.

- 15 And he gave them power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils.
- 16 And to Simon he gave the name of Peter:
- 17 And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he named them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder:
- 18 And Andrew and Philip, and Bartholomew and Matthew, and Thomas, and James of Alphaeus and Thaddeus, and Simon the Cananean:

xxi. 12-14.)—Should be with him—this tender phrase is only in Mk.—He might send them. The “he” is emphatic. Authority delegated from our Lord was to be the note of their ministry. (Cp. Jn. xiii. 18; xv. 16.)

15. To heal sicknesses. Mt. (x. 1) puts it more forcibly: “to heal all manner of diseases, and all manner of infirmities.”

16. He gave=“he imposed.”—Peter, which means “rock.” The name does not describe his natural character, but the spiritual office for which he was destined. (Cp. Mt. xvi. 16.) Mk. in future always calls him Peter. We have four lists of the Apostles given in N.T.: (1) Mt. x. 2; (2) Mk. iii. 16; (3) Lk. vi. 14; (4) Acts i. 13. In all four lists the name of St. Peter stands first.

17. The construction here is very broken. Mk. writes as though in verse 16 he had said: “And Simon, to whom he gave the name Peter.” James the son of Zebedee, commonly known as “James the Greater”—*i.e.*, the Elder. He was the first of the Apostles to suffer martyrdom (Acts xii. 2), and the only one of the Twelve whose death is actually recorded in N.T.—And John the brother of James—*i.e.*, “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (Jn. xiii. 23; xix. 26).—Boanerges—only in Mk. Boanerges is an Aramaic form of Bene-Regesh, and means “sons of thunder.” For a reason why our Lord gave them this name, see Mk. ix. 37; Mk. x. 35-37; and Lk. ix. 54. Cp. also 1 Jn. ii. 22; and 2 Jn. 10, 11.

18. Andrew, the elder brother of St. Peter, and a former disciple of St. John the Baptist (Jn. i. 40). We have three notices of him in the Gospels: Jn. vi. 8, 9; Jn. xii. 22; and Mk. xiii. 3.—Philip, a native of Bethsaida, and one of the earliest disciples of our Lord (Jn. i. 43). He, too, is mentioned specially three times in the Gospels: Jn. vi. 5; Jn. xii. 20; and Jn. xiv. 8.—Bartholomew (*i.e.*, son of Tholmai), also called Nathaniel (Jn. i. 45). Jn. always speaks of him as Nathaniel, his real name, while the other three Evangelists always call him Bartholomew. He was a native of Cana in Galilee (Jn. xxi. 2), a man of simple, guileless character (Jn. i. 47), and one of the seven to whom our Lord showed himself by the Lake of Gennesaret after his Resurrection (Jn. xxi. 2).—Matthew. See above on ii. 14.

And Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. 19

And they come to a house, and the multitude cometh 20
together again, so that they could not so much as eat
bread.

And when his friends had heard of it, they went out 21
to lay hold on him. For they said: He is become mad.

And the scribes who were come down from Jerusalem, 22

He is not mentioned after this, except in Acts i. 13.—**Thomas**, called Didymus (a twin). Cp. Jn. xi. 16, and xxi. 2.—**James of Alphaeus**—*i.e.*, the son of Alphaeus, commonly called James the Less, to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee. He is the author of the Epistle which bears his name, and later on probably became Bishop of Jerusalem. (Cp. Acts xv. 13; Gal. i. 19; ii. 9.) **Thaddeus** is the same as St. Jude. Lk. calls him "Jude the brother of James"—*i.e.*, of James the Less. He is the author of the Epistle which bears his name. He is referred to in Jn. xiv. 22.—**Simon the Cananean**. Lk. has "Simon who is called Zelotes." Chananeeus does *not* mean Canaanite, but Zealot, being derived from the Hebrew word *kana*, which means "to be zealous." The Zealots were a political party among the Jews, specially opposed to the rule of a foreign dynasty like that of Herod, and specially observant of the Law.

19. **Judas Iscariot**. Iscariot=Ish-Karioth, or the man of Karioth, a town in Judea. His father's name was Simon (Jn. vi. 71; xiii. 2, 26). All the other Apostles were Galilaeans. (Cp. Acts i. 11; ii. 7.)

20. **A house**="to his home." The house was probably that of St. Peter. We may well suppose an interval of time to elapse between verses 19 and 20. Lk. (vi. 20) inserts the Sermon on the Plain after the call of the Twelve. Mk. makes no mention of this discourse.—**So that they could not so much as eat bread**—a touch of St. Mark. The style reminds us of i. 33.

21. **His friends**. These may be "his mother and his brethren," who in verse 31 are said to have come from Nazareth, but probably they were mere followers of our Lord—*i.e.*, "those with him," as distinguished from "his brethren."—**To lay hold on him**="to get possession of him," and so protect him from further fatigue.—**He is become mad**="he is beside himself." The word is used by St. Paul in 2 Cor. v. 13 of "being beside oneself," or of "being carried away" by zeal for the cause of God. This, too, is its meaning here. Our Lord was showing clear signs of intense fatigue, and his friends were anxious lest his strength should fail. (Cp. Jn. x. 20.) The same charge was made by Festus against St. Paul (Acts xxvi. 24), after his great speech before him. "Paul, thou art beside thyself: much learning doth make thee mad."

22. **And the scribes said**. It is important to remember that this attack on our Lord arose out of the healing of "a man

said: He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of devils he casteth out devils.

- 23 And after he had called them together, he said to them in parables: How can Satan cast out Satan?
- 24 And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.
- 25 And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.
- 26 And if Satan be risen up against himself, he is divided, and cannot stand, but hath an end.
- 27 No man can enter the house of a strong man and rob him of his goods, unless he first bind the strong man, and then shall he plunder his house.

possessed with a devil, blind and dumb," who was offered to our Lord and healed by him, "so that he spoke and saw." "And all the multitudes were amazed, and said: Is not this the Son of David?" (Mt. xii. 22.) The Scribes, feeling this to be a compliment to our Lord, were at once tempted to suggest another explanation. Mt. says the Pharisees joined in making the charge. (Cp. Lk. xi. 14.) This is the first mention of Scribes who had "come down from Jerusalem," and their having done so indicates a great growth of hostility to our Lord on the part of the Jewish leaders. (On the Scribes, see Appendix, 2.)—**Beelzebub.** The name is of doubtful derivation. Some would read Beelzebul, and connect it with *zebûl*, a habitation, thus making the word to mean "lord of the dwellings"—i.e., in the devil's character as "prince of the power of this air, the spirit that now worketh on the children of unbelief" (Eph. ii. 2). Others connect it with *zebel*, which means "dirt," and so make the word mean "Lord of dirt," a term of derision among the Jews for the lord of idols. (Cp. Jn. vii. 20.)

23. After he had called them together—only in Mk. It is as though our Lord felt deeply the monstrous nature and unfairness of the charge, and would refute those who made it in the presence of friends. Notice the tone of calm dignity in every sentence of our Lord's reply.—**How can Satan cast out Satan?**—only in Mk. It is a remark that goes to the very root of the matter. Whatever be the true explanation of our Lord's power, the one they had given was at least both false and malicious.

24. And—"for."

25. And if a house—i.e., a family, inhabiting a house.

26. But hath an end—only in Mk. Mt. and Lk. here add: "But if I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then is the kingdom of God come upon you."

27. No man can enter—"but no man can enter." The "but" is very strong and emphatic. Our Lord now definitely brings himself on the scene, and depicts his wrestling with

Amen, I say to you, that all sins shall be forgiven **28**
unto the sons of men, and the blasphemies wherewith
they shall blaspheme:

But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, **29**
shall never have forgiveness, but shall be guilty of an
everlasting sin.

Satan and his victory over him. The connexion of thought is this: "So far from being in league with Satan, I am his foe and his conqueror, for he is far too strong a master of a house to witness with equanimity the spoiling of his goods." The idea of the passage seems to be taken from Isaias (xlix. 24, 25): "Shall the prey be taken from the strong? Or can that which was taken by the mighty be delivered? Thus saith the Lord: Yea verily, even the captivity shall be taken away from the strong, and that which was taken by the mighty shall be delivered."—**Of a strong man.** Cp. 2 Cor. iv. 4. Both Mt. and Lk. conclude with the words: "He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth."

28. Amen, I say to you. This formula, which is specially frequent in Jn., is used in the Gospels in an introductory way, affirming what is to follow, not what has just been said.—**And the blasphemies wherewith they shall blaspheme,** yes, even those against our Lord. "Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him, but he that shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come." (Cp. Mt. xii. 32; Lk. xii. 10.)

29. Blaspheme against the Holy Ghost. Cp. Eph. iv. 30; 1 Thess. iv. 8.—**Guilty of an everlasting sin.** The enemies of our Lord were deliberately sinning against light, and had no excuse for their sin. "If they were blind, they should not have sin: but they said: We see, and their sin remaineth" (Jn. ix. 41). Men can so blind themselves to light that they have no desire for forgiveness, and may so harden their hearts that the ordinary appeals of Divine grace have no effect upon them. Thus do they commit "the sin unto death"—spoken of in 1 Jn. v. 16—a sin that often issues in final impenitence. The Greek word for "guilty" is the same as the one used by St. Paul in 1 Cor. xi. 27, of those who are "guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord." It is a strong word, expressing the idea that such a sin has its victim absolutely in its power, and will not let him go. The sin spoken of is the deliberate, malicious rejection of light, and the perverting of the Divine works, which are intended to be the motives of faith, to the contrary purpose by attributing them to diabolical agency. Our Lord was fully and unmistakably revealing himself as the Messiah, as the one who was to be sent, as the Desired of all nations, and as the Son of God, the Divine Ambassador, and he was proving the truth of his

- 30 Because they said: He hath an unclean spirit.
 31 And his mother and his brethren came: and standing without, sent unto him, calling him.
 32 And the multitude sat about him; and they say to him: Behold thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.
 33 And answering them, he said: Who is my mother and my brethren?
 34 And looking round about on them who sat about him, he saith: Behold my mother and my brethren.
 35 For whosoever shall do the will of God, he is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

revelation by his miracles. Hence maliciously to attribute these works to Beelzebub was to sin against light, to reject the illuminating grace of the Holy Ghost, and to pervert and destroy the very foundations of faith and the supernatural life, so that any possibility of repentance, according to the ordinary laws of Divine Providence in the supernatural order, was precluded. One who, having received the grace of conversion, rejects it, and then attacks the Church as an agent of Satan (and there are many such), would be guilty of this precise sin.

30. **Because they said.** This is found only in Mk. It was this suggestion which called forth our Lord's utterances about the everlasting sin.

31. **His mother.** This is the only mention of our Lady in this Gospel, though her name occurs in vi. 3. This visit of our Lady is recorded also by Mt. (xii. 46) and Lk. (viii. 19). St. Mark alone records the fact that our Lady "sent" a message to our Lord.—**Standing without.** What a picture! Lk. says: "they could not come at him for the crowd."

32. **The multitude**—"a multitude."—**Sat about him**, quite at their ease, and keen to listen. Note the detail, so characteristic of St. Mark.—**Behold thy mother.** Notice the agitated tone in every word of this half verse. It is as though they said: "At least you must come away now, for you surely cannot keep your mother waiting."

34. **Looking round**—another detail, peculiar to Mk.—**Who sat round.** Insert the words: "in a circle."—**He saith.** Mt. adds: "stretching forth his hand towards his disciples."

35. These words imply no disparagement to our Blessed Lady, as "scornful men have coldly said." Nay, is not her authority almost implied in the words, "sent to him, calling him," of verse 31? Our Lord is but teaching us a lesson of detachment from relatives, and from all temporal goods, when engaged in apostolic work for souls. (Cp. Mk. x. 29.) And does not the emphatic position of the word "mother" at the very end of the passage give at least a faint glimpse of how our Lord loved and

CHAPTER IV

PARABLE OF THE SOWER, WITH OUR LORD'S EXPLANATION OF IT, ILLUSTRATING OUR LORD'S WORK IN THE WORLD IN GENERAL—PARABLE OF THE SEED GROWING SECRETLY, ILLUSTRATING OUR LORD'S WORK IN THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL—PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED, ILLUSTRATING THE POSITION AND WORK OF THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD—THE QUELLING OF THE GREAT STORM

AND again he began to teach by the sea side; and a great **1** multitude was gathered unto him, so that he went up into a ship, and sat in the sea; and all the multitude was upon the land by the sea side.

And he taught them many things in parables, and said **2** unto them in his doctrine:

revered his holy Mother? "He that does the will of God is my brother, and my sister—nay, more—he is dear to me as my own mother is dear—he serves my cause, even as she has served it. She is the handmaid of the Lord, and so are they, in their place and in their measure, whose meat is to do the will of my Father that is in heaven. Can I say more?" Lk. has: "they who hear the word of God and do it," for "doing the will of my Father that is in heaven." So to act was the whole aim of our Lord, who ever "was about his Father's business" (cp. Jn. v. 30), and it is that of his friends also. (Cp. Mt. vi. 10; vii. 21.)

1. Again. This word refers us back to iii. 7.—**A great multitude**—"the greatest multitude"—*i.e.*, greater than ever before. Lk. (viii. 4) tells us that a section of the audience had "hastened out of the cities around" to hear our Lord.—**Was gathered**—"is gathered," a vivid pictorial present.—**A ship**—"the ship"—*i.e.*, the one spoken of in iii. 9. Note the minuteness of detail in this verse, as being the description of one who was clearly an eye-witness of the scene.—**By the sea-side.** At first our Lord "sat by the sea-side," but the rapid increase of the multitude caused him to take refuge in the boat—probably St. Peter's (Lk. v. 3). How graphically does Mk. describe the great scene in the second portion of this verse!

2. And he taught—"he began to teach"—*i.e.*, by a series of parables. "The scenery round the lake would suggest many of the parables now spoken. From the fishing-boat the eye of our Lord rested on patches of undulating cornfields with the trodden

- 3 Hear ye: Behold the sower went out to sow.
- 4 And whilst he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the birds of the air came and ate it up.
- 5 And other some fell upon stony ground, where it had not much earth, and it shot up immediately, because it had no depth of earth.
- 6 And when the sun was risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.
- 7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.
- 8 And some fell upon good ground; and brought forth fruit that grew up, and increased, and yielded, one thirty, another sixty, and another a hundred.

pathway running through them, the *rocky ground* of the hill-side protruding here and there, the large *bushes of thorn*, growing in the very midst of the waving wheat, the deep loam of the *good rich soil* which distinguishes the whole of the Plain of Gennesaret descending close to the water's edge." He would see also the mustard-tree which grows plentifully on the shores of the lake, and the fishermen, too, with their drag-nets, and casting-nets, and bag-nets; also the flocks of birds, aquatic fowls by the lake-side, partridges and pigeons hovering over the plain. —In parables. A parable (from *paraballo*=I place beside) is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning, or the illustration of some spiritual truth by some incident of actual life. "Many things in parables"="in many parables." Mt. here gives as many as seven parables (Mt. xiii.).—And he said. Note the frequent use of this phrase; it occurs nine times in this one chapter.—In his doctrine—"in his teaching."

3. Hear ye. A sharp, characteristic summons, peculiar to Mk. This parable is also in Mt. (xiii. 1) and Lk. (viii. 4).

4. Ate it up—*i.e.*, not leaving a single seed. The Greek verb is a very strong and expressive one.

5. Stony ground—*i.e.*, rock thinly coated with soil, a common feature in the cornlands of Galilee.

6. It was scorched—"it felt the burning heat." "The plant grew rapidly in the warm Eastern night, but as the sun grew hot it languished and withered."

7. And it yielded no fruit—peculiar to Mk. Note the accumulation of the verbs in the verse. (Cp. James i. 11; 1 Pet. i. 24; Jn. xv. 6.)

8. Grew up, and increased, and yielded. Note again the accumulation of verbs, so characteristic of Mk. All are in the imperfect, denoting a continuous process.—Hundredfold. Even this highest rate of increase is not extravagant; the rich cornfields round the lake would justify these figures. It is said of Isaac that "he sowed and found that same year a hundred-

And he said: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. 9

And when he was alone, the twelve that were with him 10 asked him the parable.

And he said to them: To you it is given to know the 11 mystery of the kingdom of God; but to them that are without, all things are done in parables:

That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and 12 hearing they may hear, and not understand: lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

And he saith to them: Are you ignorant of this 13 parable? and how shall you know all parables?

fold" (Gen. xxvi. 12). The figures in Mt.'s account are given in the reverse order. Lk. speaks only of the hundredfold.

9. **He that hath ears to hear.** So the parable ends, as it began, with a solemn call to attention, and a warning to be faithful to light and guidance. The words are recorded in all three accounts of this parable. Our Lord used them on six occasions: (1) Mt. xi. 15; (2) Mt. xiii. 43; (3) Mk. iv. 9; (4) Mk. iv. 23; (5) Mk. vii. 16; (6) Lk. xiv. 35. They are not found in St. John's Gospel, but occur several times in the Apocalypse.

10. **And when he was alone**—a touch of St. Mark.—**Asked him the parable.** The question of the Twelve is given more definitely and broadly in Mt. xiii. 10: "Why speakest thou to them in parables?" It was such a contrast to the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount.

11. **The mystery.** The word occurs here only in the Gospels. Its later use in N.T. is confined chiefly to St. Paul, who uses it twenty-one times. It means here the sum total of the contents of the Gospel. (Cp. 1 Cor. ii. 7; Rom. xvi. 25; Eph. i. 9; vi. 19; 1 Tim. iii. 9.)—**To them that are without.** No reproach or slur is implied in this phrase. Their time for being called to the Fold had not yet come. The phrase is peculiar to Mk. in the Gospels. (Cp. Col. iv. 5; 1 Cor. v. 12, 13.)

12. Our Lord's words here are an adaptation of a passage from Isaias (vi. 9, 10), which is quoted in full by St. Matthew with an introduction. "The use and purpose of parables is not to hide the truth, but rather to show it. To men who honestly search after the truth, and who prize it when found, the truths of the parable are revealed; but to those who care not to undertake this search, the truths remain hidden. Teaching by parables thus tests the disposition of those who listen to them. They withdraw light from such as love darkness, while they protect the truth from the mockery of the scoffer; they find out those who are fit hearers, and ever lead them on to deeper knowledge." (Cp. Acts xxviii. 26, 27.)

13. **Are you ignorant of this parable?** These words of our

- 14 He that soweth, soweth the word.
- 15 And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown, and as soon as they have heard, immediately Satan cometh, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.
- 16 And these likewise are they that are sown in the stony ground: who when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with joy.
- 17 And they have no root in themselves, but are only for a time: and then when tribulation and persecution ariseth for the word they are presently scandalized.
- 18 And others there are who are sown among thorns: these are they that hear the word.
- 19 And the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts after other things entering in choke the word, and it is made fruitless.

Lord occur only in Mk. They are not in any sense a rebuke, but merely refer the Apostles back to what they had asked in verse 10. Some prefer to read the words as a statement, not as a question. —How shall you know? = "how shall you come to grasp clearly?" Our Lord's words imply that the parable of the sower was a very simple and fundamental one. —All parables = "all my parables" —*i.e.*, all those which they were to hear from him, not parables in general.

14. He that soweth. Notice that our Lord gives no interpretation of the actual sower of the seed. (Cp. Mt. xiii. 18-23; Lk. viii. 11-15.)

15. These are they by the wayside. The language here is very compressed, and difficult to disentangle, though the meaning is most clear. "The wayside people are they who hear, when the word is sown, but as soon as," etc. —Immediately Satan. Both words are peculiar to Mk. —As soon as they have heard = "as often as they hear."

16. Receive it = "snatch it."

17. They have no root in themselves —*i.e.*, they are shallow and impulsive; they say and they do not; they are without persistence, soon overcome by temptation, soon disheartened by the least difficulty or opposition. "The root of wisdom never faileth," but "these are only for a time." The Greek word occurs only here in the Gospels. —For the word. This is a new point, which our Lord had not mentioned in the parable. —Presently = "immediately."

18. Among thorns = "into thorns." Notice that the construction is again broken into at the end of the verse.

19. Cares of the world —*i.e.*, "the cares of the age," of the present course of events. Lk. has "the cares of this life," but

And these are they who are sown upon good ground, **20**
 who hear the word, and receive it, and yield fruit, the
 one thirty, another sixty, and another a hundred.

And he said to them: Doth a candle come in to be **21**
 put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set
 on a candlestick?

For there is nothing hid, which shall not be made **22**
 manifest: neither was it made secret, but that it may
 come abroad. .

If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. **23**

And he said to them: Take heed what you hear. In **24**
 what measure you shall mete, it shall be measured to you
 again, and more shall be given to you.

Mk.'s phrase is wider and more impressive. (Cp. Phil. iv. 6;
 1 Pet. v. 7-10.)—The deceitfulness of riches. Cp. 1 Tim. vi.
 9-11.—The lusts after other things—peculiar to Mk.—
 Entering in. The Greek word here is very expressive. "En-
 tering in," as an invading army, and taking possession as though
 they had every right so to act.

20. Receive it. The Greek word is different to the one used
 in verse 16. It always means in the N.T. "to receive with joy
 and gratitude," as though quite unworthy of the boon.—
Yield fruit. Lk. adds: "in patience."

21. Doth a candle. Lk. puts this as a statement: "No man
 lighting a candle, covereth it with a vessel." Mk.'s sharp inter-
 rogative, expecting the answer "no," is much more vivid.—
A candle—i.e., a lamp. The Jewish lamps were of earthenware,
 shaped like a small tea-pot with a handle, and fed by oil.—
Come in. This is a strangely "personal" verb to use of a
 candle. It is as though our Lord, the Light of the world, asso-
 ciated himself closely with the figure—**A bushel** "the bushel."
 The original word *modius* denotes a Roman dry measure con-
 taining 16 *sestarii*, or about a peck. What is here meant is not
 the measure in the abstract, but the vessel to contain it.—
To be set on a candlestick. Our Lord practically says: "Do not
 suppose that what I now commit to you in secret is to be con-
 cealed for ever; the light is kindled by me in you, that by your
 ministry it may disperse the darkness of the whole world." It
 begins "in secret," nay, it was "*made secret*," but it is "to
 come abroad." (Cp. Mt. x. 27.)

22. The first part of this verse is also in Lk. (viii. 17); the
 second part is peculiar to Mk. (Cp. 1 Cor. iv. 5.)

23. Cp. Heb. ii. 1-4.

24. Take heed what you hear="look well at what you hear"
 —i.e., weigh its force and meaning carefully. The sense of this
 and the succeeding verse is: "The appropriation of any measure
 of divine truth implies a capacity for receiving yet more: and

- 25 For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, that also which he hath shall be taken away from him.
- 26 And he said: So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the earth.
- 27 And should sleep, and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring, and grow up whilst he knoweth not.
- 28 For the earth of itself bringeth forth fruit, first the blade, then the ear, afterwards the full corn in the ear.
- 29 And when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.
- 30 And he said: To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? or to what parable shall we compare it?
- 31 It is as a grain of mustard seed: which when it is

each gift, if assimilated, is the forerunner of another. The converse of this is also true." Our Lord more than once thus spoke in paradox. (Cp. Mk. viii. 35; x. 31.)

26. This parable of the seed growing secretly is the only parable peculiar to St. Mark. It corresponds closely to the parable of the leaven given by St. Matthew (xiii. 33). Its main lesson is that our Lord, having founded the Church and endowed it with gifts and power of spiritual growth, leaves it alone, as it were, to grow and ripen by itself. He has ascended into heaven, but with the intention of returning, when its period of growth is complete, that is, at the Last Day, and of then gathering in the fruits.

27. Whilst he knoweth not="how he knoweth not." The parable is told in St. Mark's most vivid style, and should be committed to memory. (Cp. 1 Pet. i. 23-25.)

28. The earth of itself. The phrase, of course, in no way excludes the skill of the farmer, nor the help of the sun and rains. The thought is that when the farmer has done his part, the growth of the seed is beyond his reach, and proceeds automatically. The Greek word for "of itself" occurs only once more in N.T. (Acts xii. 10).

29. The sickle. The sickle is mentioned in N.T. only here and in Apoc. xiv. 14, 15. The phrase seems to be borrowed from Joel iii. 13: "Put ye in the sickles, for the harvest is ripe."

30. To what shall we liken? This method of asking a question before beginning an address, as though the speaker took his audience into his confidence, was quite common with the Jewish Rabbis (cp. Is. xl. 18): "To whom have you likened God? or what image will you make for him?" This parable is recorded also in Mt. (xiii. 31) and Lk. (xlii. 18).

31. A grain of mustard seed. The mustard seed seems to be the *Sinapis nigra*, which, though but a herb, grows to a great

grown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that are in the earth:

And when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh ³² greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches, so that the birds of the air may dwell under the shadow thereof.

And with many such parables, he spoke to them the ³³ word, according as they were able to hear.

And without a parable he did not speak unto them: ³⁴ but apart, he explained all things to his disciples.

And he saith to them that day, when evening was ³⁵ come: Let us pass over to the other side.

And sending away the multitude, they take him even as ³⁶ he was in the ship: and there were other ships with him.

height in the warm valley of the Jordan, forming branches, and assuming the appearance of a small tree. Our Lord again refers to the mustard seed as being so small in comparison with its results in Mt. (xvii. 19) and Lk. (xvii. 6).

^{32.} Shooteth out great branches—peculiar to Mk. So the Church of God, at her foundation, numbered in all but one hundred and twenty souls (Acts i. 15), yet soon "there were added in one day about three thousand" (Acts ii. 41); "the multitude of men and women who believed in the Lord was more increased" (Acts v. 14); soon "their faith was spoken of in all the world" (Rom. i. 8); "their sound had gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the whole world" (Rom. x. 18). And the words of Ezechiel were fulfilled: "On the high mountains of Israel will I plant (my church), and it shall shoot forth into branches, and shall bear fruit, and it shall become a great cedar: and all birds shall dwell under it, and every fowl shall make its nest under the shadow of the branches thereof" (Ezech. xvii. 23).

^{33.} According as they were able to hear—a touch of St. Mark. (Cp. Jn. xvi. 12; 1 Cor. iii. 2; Heb. v. 12-14.)

^{34.} Without a parable he did not speak. Mt. concludes this sentence with a quotation from Ps. lxxvii. 2: "I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world."—But apart he explained all things to his disciples. A touch of St. Mark, disclosing to us something at least of our Lord's private life with his chosen disciples. The Greek verb for "explained" is one specially used of interpreting dreams and of deciding grave questions. (Cp. Acts xix. 39.)

^{35.} This pictorial verse is peculiar to Mk. The account of stilling the storm at sea is also given in Mt. (viii. 23) and Lk. (viii. 22).

^{36.} They take him. The Greek verb is a strong one to denote the taking charge of someone, and becoming responsible for his

- 37 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that the ship was filled.
- 38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, sleeping upon a pillow, and they awake him, and say to him: Master, doth it not concern thee that we perish?
- 39 And rising up, he rebuked the wind, and said to the sea: Peace, be still. And the wind ceased: and there was a great calm.
- 40 And he said to them: Why are you fearful? have you

safety. Our Lord tenderly uses it of himself in reference to his own in Jn. xiv. 3: "And if I shall go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will take you to myself, that where I am, you also may be."—Even as he was—a touch of St. Mark—Other ships were with him—a detail peculiar to Mk. One boat seems to have sufficed for our Lord and the Twelve, but clearly others, besides the Twelve, were witnesses of the miracle now to be related. And to this St. Matthew bears testimony, when he says in his account (viii. 26): "and the *men* wondered."

37. A great storm of wind. It was one of those sudden and violent squalls to which the Sea of Galilee was notoriously exposed, lying, as it does, 600 feet lower than the sea, and surrounded by mountain gorges, which act like gigantic funnels to draw down the cold winds from the mountains.—Beat into—"came crowding up into."—Was filled="was already beginning to fill."

38. He was in the hinder part of the ship—peculiar to Mk.—Upon a pillow="upon the pillow." A touch of St. Mark. It was probably a wooden head-rest, and the only one on board. Sleep is attributed to our Lord only on this occasion.—They awake him, and say. Note the vivid present. St. Matthew uses the past tense.—Master, doth it not concern thee that we perish? Mt. has, "Lord, save us, we perish"; Lk. has, "Master, we perish." This is a good instance of the fact that "there is not one narrative which St. Mark gives in common with St. Matthew and St. Luke, to which he does not contribute some special force or feature." The touch of natural resentment at our Lord's seeming neglect which is seen in Mk.'s "doth it not concern thee?" is absent from Mt. and Lk.

39. He rebuked the wind. Cp. Ps. cv. 9: "And he rebuked the Red Sea, and it was dried up." Mt. makes a rebuke to the Twelve for their want of faith precede the stilling of the storm.—Peace, be still. St. Mark alone records the words which our Lord used. "Be still" is equivalent to "Be still, and remain so."—The wind ceased="sank to rest," as if weary of a fruitless struggle.

40. Fearful. The Greek word occurs only here and in the terrible passage in Apoc. (xxi. 8). Our Lord thus gave his

not faith yet? And they feared exceedingly: and they said one to another, Who is this (thinkest thou), that both wind and sea obey him?

CHAPTER V

THE HEALING OF (1) THE GERGASENE DEMONIAK—
(2) THE WOMAN WITH AN ISSUE OF BLOOD—(3) THE
DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS

AND they came over the strait of the sea into the **1** country of the Gerasens.

And as he went out of the ship, immediately there **2** met him out of the monuments a man with an unclean spirit.

disciples a great warning as to the need of faith.—**Have you not faith yet?**—*i.e.*, after some months of discipleship. The word “yet” is only in St. Mark.—**And they said one to another**—not to our Lord. Their awe kept them silent. (Cp. Jn. xxi. 12.) This miracle had probably come home to the Apostles more strongly than any they had witnessed. It touched them personally, for by it they had been delivered from imminent peril. It moreover appealed to them as men well used to the navigation of the Lake, and thus threw a new light on the person of him with whom they were daily associated.—**Both wind and sea**—not merely evil spirits and diseases.

1. Over the strait of the sea—*i.e.*, across its narrowest part. This miracle is also recorded in Mt. (viii. 28) and Lk. (viii. 26), but, as in other instances, with special fulness of detail by Mk.—**The Gerasens.** There is some confusion here as to the exact reading between Gerasens, Gadarenes, and Gergesenes. Of these three districts, Gergesa is on the Lake of Galilee, exactly opposite to Magdala, where the lake is broadest. Gadara is some six miles below its most southern point, while Gerasa is far away in Peræa, and cannot possibly have been the scene of the miracle. Gergesa had steep hills coming right down to the water's edge, and was noted for its tombs. Origen tells us that the exact site of the miracle was here pointed out in his day, and St. Jerome bears witness to the existence of a Gergesa on the east shore of the lake.

2. As he went out—*i.e.*, our Lord had but just stepped ashore when the incident occurred.—**Immediately**—again St. Mark's vivid word.—**Out of the monuments.** These tombs were either

- 3 Who had his dwelling in the tombs, and no man now could bind him, not even with chains.
- 4 For having been often bound with fetters and chains, he had burst the chains, and broken the fetters in pieces, and no one could tame him.
- 5 And he was always day and night in the monuments and in the mountains, crying and cutting himself with stones.
- 6 And seeing Jesus afar off, he ran and adored him.
- 7 And crying with a loud voice, he said: What have I to do with thee, Jesus the Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God that thou torment me not.

natural caves or recesses hewn out of the rock. They would form a ready dwelling and refuge for such maniacs. Tombs of this kind can still be traced in more than one of the ravines on the eastern side of the lake. (See Thomson, "Land and the Book," p. 376.)—A man. Mt. (viii. 28) speaks of *two* men, even as he speaks of two blind men (xx. 30), where Mk. and Lk. mention only one. Probably one was the fiercer of the two, or perchance only one of the two wished to follow our Lord when cured.

3. No man now could bind him, not even with chains. Mt. adds: "he was exceeding fierce, so that none could pass by that way." Lk. adds: "he had a devil now a very long time, and he wore no clothes"—Now—"now any longer." What pathos in these words! What scenes of cruel violence and vain attempts to control him do they recall!

4. Having been often bound. Try to picture the scene thus graphically described. The whole of verses 4 and 5 is peculiar to Mk. One can almost *hear* the accounts given by the neighbours of fruitless struggles with the maniac, causing him untold pain, in the words "having been often bound."—Burst the chains—"torn the chains link from link." The Greek word is most strong and expressive. (Cp. Acts xix. 16.)

5. Cutting himself—"cutting himself severely," or "frequently," in all directions, quite recklessly. And all these bleeding wounds were exposed to view, for "he wore no clothes!" The Greek word for "cutting himself" occurs only here in N.T.

6. Afar off—a touch of St. Mark.—He ran—also a touch of St. Mark. Picture the onrush of the yelling, afflicted man towards our Lord. No one would have dared to try to bring him; he had to come of his own accord.

7. He said—"he says"—the vivid historical present, so characteristic of Mk.—Of the most high God. It has been remarked that this expression occurs in N.T. only in passages that have an Old Testament ring about them (*e.g.*, Lk. i. 32, 35, 76; vi. 35; viii. 28; Heb. vii. 1), or in sayings attributed to the

For he said unto him: Go out of the man, thou un-8
clean spirit.

And he asked him: What is thy name? And he 9
saith to him: My name is Legion, for we are many.

And he besought him much, that he would not drive 10
him away out of the country.

And there was there near the mountain a great herd 11
of swine, feeding.

And the spirits besought him, saying: Send us into 12
the swine, that we may enter into them.

possessed, as here and in Acts xvi. 17. We call God "our Father."—I adjure thee by God. Note the strength and urgency of the maniac's words.

8. For he said—"for he had said." Our Lord gave His command *first*, and thus occasioned the protestations recorded in the last part of verse 7.

9. And he asked him—"moreover he went on to ask him."—What is thy name? This feature is omitted by Mt., while in Lk. the answer is only one word: "Legion." Mk., as usual, gives the narrative more vividly.—Legion. "To a Palestinian of our Lord's time," as has been well pointed out, "this name would connote not only the idea of some vast number (for the strength of a legion often reached 5,000 or 6,000), but also that of submission to a superior will, and the miseries of a military occupation by a foreign power." The devil arrogated to himself a name of power, and insinuated that he was the leader of many.—We are many. Cp. Lk. viii. 2 and Mt. xii. 45.

10. He besought—"he kept on beseeching." The *singular* is used because the spirits, speaking by the voice of the man, are still regarded as a single individual. Mk. throughout the narrative closely identifies the two.—Out of the country—"out of that region."

11. Herd of swine. This was not a common thing, and one probably not to be met with on the west coast of the Jordan. The Evangelist denotes the lawless nature of the country by this one detail.

12. And the spirits. Their hold on the man is now at an end, and St. Mark speaks of them separately for the first time. Up till now the verbs have been in the singular, for it was the man that was mainly considered; but now they are in the plural. The man no longer speaks for the demons, but the demons speak through the man.—Send us into the swine. Swine were unclean animals to the Jews, and our Lord always speaks of them in terms of contempt. (Cp. Mt. vii. 6; Lk. xv. 15.)—Into them—*i.e.*, rather than "into the abyss," of which Lk. tells us they begged to be free.

- 13 And Jesus immediately gave them leave. And the unclean spirits going out, entered into the swine: and the herd with great violence was carried headlong into the sea, being about two thousand, and were stifled in the sea.
- 14 And they that fed them fled, and told it in the city and in the fields. And they went out to see what was done:
- 15 And they came to Jesus, and they see him that was troubled with the devil, sitting, clothed, and well in his wits, and they were afraid.
- 16 And they that had seen it, told them, in what manner he had been dealt with who had the devil: and concerning the swine.
- 17 And they began to pray him that he would depart from their coasts.

13. Gave them leave. In Mt. we read: "Jesus said to them: Go"—a mere permission. Mk.'s phrase expresses more definitely the exact truth. "Not even over a legion of swine have the devils power, unless it be given them by God," says Tertullian. —Was carried headlong—a word used of the unreasoning onrush of a crowd. "The shore at this point is so narrow, and the bluff behind is so steep, that a herd of swine rushing frantically down must certainly have been overwhelmed in the sea before they could recover themselves."—Being about two thousand—only in Mk.—Stifled. So also in Lk. Mt. has "perished." The word used by Mk. is, as usual, more picturesque and expressive.

14. And in the fields—a touch of St. Mark.—And they. Mt. has, "the whole city went out to meet Jesus." The flight and destruction of all the swine would have been specially dwelt upon by their keepers; but a far greater wonder than this actually met their eyes when they came upon the scene, and beheld the demoniac transformed and "well in his wits."

15. And they came—"they come," and "they see"—very vivid presents. The Greek verb for "see" is an expressive one, denoting a careful beholding and examination.—Sitting—*i.e.*, as a disciple. Lk. adds: "at the feet of Jesus." (Cp. Acts xxii. 3.)—Clothed—perhaps with a spare cloak belonging to one of the Twelve.—Well in his wits—*i.e.*, completely master of himself—no longer the slave of sin.

16. And they that had seen it—*i.e.*, the Twelve, and a few bystanders. Our Lord said no word to them; he let what had been done speak for itself.—Told them—"told them very fully," with every detail.

17. They began to pray him that he would depart. Lk. represents this petition as being quite unanimous. The reason for it

And when he went up into the ship, he that had been **18** troubled with the devil, began to beseech him that he might be with him.

And he admitted him not, but saith to him: Go into **19** thy house to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had mercy on thee.

And he went his way, and began to publish in Decapolis **20** how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men wondered.

And when Jesus had passed again in the ship over **21** the strait, a great multitude assembled together unto him, and he was nigh unto the sea.

And there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue **22**

is variously given. The loss of so much property is assigned by some, and a fear that they might lose even more. But may it not have been a sense of having been overwhelmed by this double marvel of divine power, and that they said "Depart from us" very much in the same sense as St. Peter said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," after he had witnessed the miraculous draught of fishes? (Lk. v. 8).

18. When he went up—*i.e.*, when he was in the act of stepping into the ship.—**That he might be with him.** The words come as the tender echo of "he made that twelve should be with him" (Mk. iii. 14).

19. To thy friends—only in Mk. (Cp. 1 Tim. v. 8).—**And hath had mercy on thee**—only in Mk.—**Tell them how great things.** This command, be it noted, is the exact opposite of the injunction so often and so strongly imposed by our Lord, in no way to give publicity to what he had done on behalf of the sick and afflicted. (Cp. Mk. vii. 36; ix. 8.)

20. In Decapolis—only in Mk. Decapolis was a region including a group of ten cities, as its name implies, all, with the one exception of Scythopolis, situated eastward of the Jordan. The term occurs only three times in N.T.—here, and Mt. iv. 25, and Mk. vii. 31. The Romans conquered Syria in B.C. 65, and then rebuilt and endowed with peculiar privileges these "ten cities." The term seems to have been employed loosely to denote a large district extending along both sides of the Jordan. By some even Damascus is included among these ten cities.—**And all men wondered**—peculiar to Mk.

21. Over the strait—*i.e.*, as Mt. says, "into his own city," Capharnaum, on the western shore of the lake.—**Assembled together**—"swarmed down upon him," a strong, expressive phrase, truly Marcan. Lk. adds: "they received him, for they were all waiting for him" (viii. 40).

22. There cometh—a vivid present. This miracle is also recorded by Mt. (ix. 18) and Lk. (viii. 41), and again Mk.'s

named Jairus: and seeing him, falleth down at his feet.

- 23 And he besought him much, saying: My daughter is at the point of death, come, lay thy hand upon her, that she may be safe, and may live.
- 24 And he went with him, and a great multitude followed him, and they thronged him.
- 25 And a woman who was under an issue of blood twelve years,
- 26 And had suffered many things from many physicians;

narrative is the fullest and most detailed of the three.—**One of the rulers of the synagogue.** In a small synagogue there would be only one such officer, in a large one there would be several. (Cp. Acts xiii. 15.) His functions were not priestly, but merely administrative, including the appointment of readers and preachers. The names of those who were the objects of our Lord's healing mercy are but rarely given. In this case it is given by Mk. and Lk., but not by Mt. (On the Synagogue, see Appendix, 4.)—**Falleth down at his feet**—a striking act of humility on the part of a ruler of the synagogue in presence of a crowd of people. Jairus recognized that one mightier than he was present. The Pharisees therefore had no right to ask: "Hath any of the rulers believed in Him?" (Jn. vii. 48). One at least had done so, and they knew it.

23. Much—a touch of St. Mark.—**My daughter**—"my little daughter," a diminutive of affection, peculiar to Mk. in N.T. Lk. adds that she was "an only daughter," and that she was "almost twelve years old."—**At the point of death**—peculiar to Mk.—**Come, | lay thy hand upon her, | that she may be safe, | and may live.** | Notice these four disjointed phrases. The Greek construction here is very broken, and is peculiar to Mk., and exactly reflects the anxiety of the speaker. One can almost hear the sobs of Jairus between each clause, as though he could hardly speak for sorrow. Notice, too, the climax in the word "live." All leads up to this. Jairus very likely had heard that our Lord had worked miracles by the touch of his hand (cp. Lk. iv. 40), and so suggested this simple means to him.

24. **They thronged him.** The Greek word for "thronged" is found only here in N.T. Lk. says: "they smothered him." Both writers express by different words the excitement of the crowd, and the way in which they pressed upon our Lord.

25. **Twelve years.** She had therefore suffered as many years as the daughter of Jairus had lived. There is a tradition that this woman was St. Veronica. Mt. and Lk. also recount this miracle, and in the same context.

26. This verse is peculiar to Mk. Lk., "the beloved physician," is not so severe on the unsuccessful physicians. He says:

and had spent all that she had, and was nothing the better, but rather the worse,

When she heard of Jesus, came in the crowd behind 27 him, and touched his garment.

For she said: If I shall touch but his garment, I shall 28 be whole.

And forthwith the fountain of her blood was dried up, 29 and she felt in her body that she was healed of the evil.

And immediately Jesus knowing in himself the virtue 30 that had proceeded from him, turning to the multitude, said: Who hath touched my garments?

"she had bestowed all her substance on physicians, and could not be healed by any."

27. When she heard of Jesus—"when she had heard the reports (or doings) of Jesus." For the phrase, cp. Lk. vii. 37. —Touched his garment. It would be by no means easy for her to make her way through such a crowd, and reach our Lord. The part she touched was the edge of the outer garment. The Law required every Jew to attach tassels to the corners of his quadrangular covering, and these, according to later usage, consisted of three threads of white wool twisted together with a cord of blue. "The Lord said to Moses: Speak to the children of Israel, and thou shalt tell them to make to themselves fringes in the corners of their garments, putting in them ribands of blue: that when they shall see them, they may remember all the commandments of the Lord, and not follow their own thoughts and eyes, going astray after divers things, but rather being mindful of the precepts of the Lord, may do them and be holy to their God" (Num. xv. 37-40). Those who, in our Lord's time, wished to be considered specially righteous used to "make their phylacteries broad, and enlarge their fringes" (Mt. xxiii. 5). Two of these fringes or tassels usually hung down at the bottom of the robe, while one hung over the shoulder where the robe was fastened round the person.

28. She said—Mt. adds: "within herself." The Greek implies that she kept on repeating the words to herself.—But his garment—"but his garments." The Greek noun is here in the plural. It is as though she said: "If I touch any part at all of his raiment."

29. And forthwith—again the usual phrase. So, too, in verse 30.—She was healed—"she is healed." The vivid present transfers us into the woman's own thoughts. "I am healed," she exclaimed to herself, with delight and gratitude.

30. Turning to the multitude—"turning among (or, in the thick of) the multitude," giving us a picture of how "they thronged him." The act of turning is very characteristic of our Lord. (Cp. Lk. xxiii. 28.)—The virtue that had proceeded

- 31 And his disciples said to him: Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who hath touched me?
- 32 And he looked about to see her who had done this.
- 33 But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.
- 34 And he said to her: Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace, and be thou whole of thy disease.
- 35 While he was yet speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying: Thy daughter is dead: why dost thou trouble the master any further?
- 36 But Jesus having heard the word that was spoken,

from him. Our Lord knew himself to be the source of this miraculous cure: even so his Apostles knew that they were *not* the source of the cures they wrought, "that not by their strength or power had they made the lame man to walk" (Acts xiii. 12).

31. And his disciples said. Lk. has: "Peter and they that were with him." The remark is exactly in St. Peter's impetuous style.

32. He looked about. The verb is in the imperfect, implying a long and scrutinizing gaze. The whole verse is peculiar to Mk.

33. But the woman. Lk. feelingly adds: "seeing that she was not hid."—Fearing and trembling. For the combination of the inward feeling and its outward manifestation, cp. 1 Cor. ii. 3; Eph. vi. 5; Phil. ii. 12.—Told him all the truth—a touch of St. Mark. Lk. gives the details of her statement.

34. Daughter. Our Lord is recorded to have addressed no other woman by this title. For the rest of the verse, cp. Lk. vii. 50.—Be thou whole of thy disease—*i.e.*, be whole and continue to be whole from it from this time forth. These words of our Lord are only in Mk.

35. While he was yet speaking—"while He is yet speaking"—a vivid present.—Thy daughter is dead. Try to imagine the feelings of Jairus during the long delay caused by the miracle on the woman. And now he sees messengers coming from his house, and he knows full well what they have to report. Our Lord seems to have felt the trial to his faith to have been almost too severe, and so he comforts him in verse 36.—Why dost thou trouble the master any further? The words "any further" are peculiar to Mk. Clearly they believed in our Lord's power to heal the sick, but not in his power to raise the dead to life. The Greek word for "trouble" is a strong one; it originally meant "to flay," and then "to harass" or "annoy." For "the master" read "the teacher."

36. Having heard—"having overheard." The word usually bears the sense in Biblical Greek of to hear without paying

saith to the ruler of the synagogue: Fear not, only believe.

And he admitted not any man to follow him, but 37 Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

And they come to the house of the ruler of the 38 synagogue; and he seeth a tumult, and people weeping and wailing much.

And going in, he saith to them: Why make you this 39 ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.

And they laughed him to scorn. But he having put 40

attention to what has been said. It is thus twice used in Mt. (xviii. 17).—Only believe. Lk. adds: “and she shall be safe.”

37. Peter, and James, and John. These three alone were also privileged to be witnesses of the Transfiguration and of the Agony in the Garden.—To follow him—i.e., into the house. When they reached the entrance to the house our Lord, as Lk. says, made them all stay outside. There were enough inside already, and these, too, were all dismissed. The parents of the child, as we see from verse 40, were also to be witnesses of the miracle.

38. And they come—a vivid present.—He seeth—“he gazeth at”—a prolonged look.—A tumult. As Jairus was well known and of good family, the number of mourners would be very great. So, too, the death of Lazarus brought many from Jerusalem and its neighbourhood “to comfort Martha and Mary concerning their brother.” (Cp. Jn. xi. 19, 31.)—People weeping. Mt. includes flute players among those mourners who were hired for the purpose. Even the poorest in Israel would afford his dead wife not less than two minstrels and one woman to make lamentations. Cp. Jer. ix. 17. “Call for the mourning women, and let them come: let them hasten, and take up a lamentation for us: let our eyes shed tears, and our eyelids run down with waters.”—Wailing much. “The Greek word for ‘wailing’ is formed from *alala*, a cry uttered originally by soldiers going into battle, but afterwards adapted to other cries expressing various feelings. Elsewhere in the N.T. it is used only in 1 Cor. xiii. 1, to denote the clanging of a cymbal.”

39. Why make you this ado?—only in Mk. Mt. has the sterner: “Give place”; Lk. more tenderly has: “Weep not.”—The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. She was, of course, really dead, and our Lord knew it; so did the bystanders, as is clear from the laughter with which they greeted our Lord’s words; but as she was so soon to be awakened to life, her death could only be regarded as a short slumber. Compare our Lord’s words about Lazarus (Jn. xi. 11): “Lazarus our friend sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.”

40. They laughed him to scorn. The Greek word occurs only here in N.T., and is the same in Mt., Mk., and Lk. The

them all out, taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.

41 And taking the damsel by the hand, he saith to her: Talitha cumi, which is, being interpreted: Damsel (I say to thee), arise.

42 And immediately the damsel rose up, and walked: and she was twelve years old; and they were astonished with a great astonishment.

English version exactly represents the force of the Greek.—Put them all out. The Greek verb here used implies that this was by no means an easy task. The mourners were paid to be present, and some sternness and insistence would be necessary before they would consent to leave the room. Our Lord used such severity on other occasions also. (Cp. Mk. xi. 15, and Jn. ii. 15.)—Taketh . . . entereth—vivid presents.—The damsel—"the little child"—again a diminutive of affection. St. Mark is noted for his use of diminutives.—Where the damsel was lying—a picturesque detail peculiar to Mk., and clearly gathered from an eye-witness of the scene. "I saw the damsel lying dead on her bed," St. Peter would say. The raising of Tabitha to life by St. Peter (Acts ix. 36-41) presents a remarkable parallel to this miracle of our Lord.

41. Damsel. This word occurs twice in this verse, but in the Greek the words used are different. The first should be translated "little child," the second "maiden."—Taking by the hand. With what facility and ease does our Lord, the Resurrection and the Life, recall the dead to life! When Elias raised the son of the widow of Sarephta to life, "he stretched and measured himself upon the child three times, and cried to the Lord" (3 Kings xvii. 21). Again, when Eliseus raised a dead child to life, "he lay upon the child, and he put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and he bowed himself upon him, and the child's flesh grew warm: then he returned, and walked in the house, once to and fro; and he went up, and lay upon him, and the child gaped seven times and opened his eyes" (4 Kings iv. 34). There is none of this elaborate detail in the case of the child of Jairus. When our Lord raises the dead to life, all is done quickly and simply, by a word, as from a Master, the Author of life (Acts iii. 15). Cp. Lk. vii. 14; Jn. xi. 43.—Talitha cumi. St. Mark alone records the actual words used by our Lord. (Cp. vii. 34.) The words are Aramaic, which was the language spoken in Palestine at this time.

42. And walked—"went about walking"—peculiar to Mk. Strength returned as well as life. This is the only instance of our Lord's raising the dead to life recorded by St. Mark.—

And he charged them strictly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat. 43

CHAPTER VI

OUR LORD TEACHES AT NAZARETH—HE FORMALLY SENDS THE APOSTLES “TWO AND TWO” TO PREACH—THE BEHEADING OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST—THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND IN THE DESERT

AND going out from thence, he went into his own country: and his disciples followed him.

And when the sabbath was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were in admiration at his doctrine saying: How came this man by all these things? and what wisdom is this that is given to him, and such mighty works as are wrought by his hands?

And she was twelve—“for she was twelve.”—Astonished with a great astonishment. Note the strength of the phrase used to express utter amazement at what had taken place. The English but feebly expresses the force of the Greek; and the Douay version omits the word “immediately” which occurs here. “And immediately commanded that something should be given her to eat.”

43. He charged them strictly. Our Lord apparently wished to leave the place as quietly as possible, and to keep his miracles as hidden as possible.

1. From thence—*i.e.*, from the house of Jairus and from Capharnaum. Our Lord's motive was probably to get away from the enthusiasm of the crowd. (Cp. Jn. vi. 15.)—Into his own country—*i.e.*, to Nazareth. Our Lord's connection with Bethlehem seems quite to have been forgotten. (Cp. Jn. vii. 41, 42.) In Lk. (iv. 14-30) we have a long account of a visit of our Lord to Nazareth, of his discourse there on the Sabbath, and of the treatment he received. This present visit recorded by Mk. and Mt. (xiii.) may be the same as that one, and probably is so.

2. He began to teach. The Greek implies that this was a new departure on the part of our Lord, and that he had never taught in that synagogue before.—At his doctrine. These words are not in the Greek, which has simply, “they were filled with

- 3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joseph, and Jude, and Simon? are not also his sisters here with us? And they were scandalized in regard of him.
- 4 And Jesus said to them: A prophet is not without

amazement." Notice the five sharp questions here strung together, so vividly representing the chattering and excitement of the people.—**This man**—"such a man," with almost a notion of contempt. (Cp. Jn. vii. 15.) The Greek here is very compressed and expressive; literally it is: "whence such things to such a one?"—**Given to him.** They knew not who our Lord was, or they would not have used such a phrase of him "in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth corporally" (Col. ii. 9). Thus in ignorance they spoke of him who is "the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty" (Apoc. i. 8); nothing is "given" to him, for "all things were created by him and in him; he is before all, and by him all things consist" (Col. i. 16, 17), and he "upholdeth all things by the word of his power" (Heb. i. 3).—**Mighty works.** It is worthy of note that the miracles of our Lord are continually referred to as "signs and wonders" or "signs" or "powers" alone, but never as "wonders" alone. The people of Nazareth had not seen any of these mighty works; they had only heard reports of them; and our Lord's refusal to work any miracles before their eyes was one of their complaints against him. (Cp. Lk. iv. 23.)

3. The carpenter—"the well-known carpenter." Mt. has: "is not this the carpenter's son?" According to Jewish custom, even Rabbis learnt some handicraft. So, too, St. Paul "laboured with his own hands" as a tent-maker. (Cp. Acts. xviii. 3; 1 Cor. iv. 12.)—**The son of Mary.** The absence of all mention of St. Joseph in Mk. is noteworthy.—**The brother of James and Joseph.** The four "brothers" here mentioned, and also in Mt. xiii. 55, and the "sisters" whose names are nowhere recorded, were in all probability the children of Cleopas and of Mary, the sister and namesake of our Blessed Lady, and hence the "cousins" of our Lord. In ch. xv. 40, we again read of "Mary, the mother of James the Less and of Joseph." In St. Paul, too (Gal. i. 19), we read that at his first visit to Jerusalem, after his conversion, he saw none of the Apostles, save Peter and "James, the brother of the Lord."—**They were scandalized in regard of him.** Cp. 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8; Rom. ix. 33. Our Lord warned his followers that in spite of his miracles, the world would be scandalized in his regard. (Mt. xi. 6.) For the "scandal" of the Cross, cp. 1 Cor. i. 23, and Gal. v. 11.

4. And Jesus said. These words of our Lord are an answer to the objection made to him that he had worked no miracles in their midst, as he had done so copiously at Capharnaum. He

honour, but in his own country, and in his own house, and among his own kindred.

And he could not do any mighty work there, only 5 that he cured a few that were sick, laying his hands upon them.

And he wondered because of their unbelief, and he 6 went through the villages round about teaching.

And he called the twelve; and began to send them two 7 and two, and gave them power over unclean spirits.

here assumes the office of a Prophet, "mighty in work and word before God and all the people" (Lk. xxiv. 19), and shows this visit to Nazareth to have been an essential part of the training of the Apostles for their future work. They have there seen their Master "come unto his own," but not received and welcomed even by them. And the servant is not above his Lord! As our Lord left Nazareth, he could make his own the words of Isaiah: "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength without cause and in vain: therefore my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God;" and such words must be the support and guide of them who preach the gospel in every age. (Cp. Jn. xv. 18-21.)

5. He could not do any mighty work there. Mk. is here, as usual, more pointed and emphatic than Mt., who merely has: "He wrought not many miracles there." (Cp. Jn. iv. 44.)—He cured a few—perhaps privately, and in such a way that the fact only became known after our Lord's departure.

6. He wondered because of their unbelief—peculiar to Mk. (Cp. Mt. viii. 10). To the people of Nazareth, as our Lord now left them, the words of St. Paul applied most truly: "The earth that drinketh in the rain which cometh often upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is tilled, receiveth blessing from God. But that which bringeth forth thorns and briars is reprobate, and very near unto a curse, whose end is to be burnt" (Heb. vi. 8.) Since Nazareth would not hearken to him, he now went to the villages round about. (Cp. Acts xiii. 46.)—Round about. The Greek has "in a circle," so that our Lord came back to the point from which he started—*i.e.*, the Lake of Gennesaret. Our Lord seems never to have gone back to Nazareth after this.—Teaching. Mt. (ix. 35) adds: "and healing every disease and every infirmity."

7. He called—"He summoned with authority."—Began to send. Again the Greek marks this step as a new departure. The Apostles had by now received some preliminary training in their work, and this is their first test mission. According to Mt. and Lk., their "faculties" included also the power to preach and "to heal all manner of diseases and all manner of infirmities."

- 8 And he commanded them that they should take nothing for the way, but a staff only: no scrip, no bread, nor money in their purse.
- 9 But to be shod with sandals, and that they should not put on two coats.
- 10 And he said to them: Wheresoever you shall enter into a house there abide till you depart from that place.
- 11 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you: going forth from thence, shake off the dust from your feet for a testimony to them.

Mt. (x. 5-42) gives us at great length our Lord's discourse to the Twelve before sending them to preach. (Cp. Lk. ix. 1-6.)—**Two and two**—a touch of St. Mark. Galilee would thus now be evangelized in six different directions. Judas Iscariot must have had a part in this work, and have received the same powers as the others!—**Gave them power over unclean spirits.** It is noteworthy that Mk. alone mentions this special power, and he does so with emphasis, even as he gives such prominence to our Lord's miracles over evil spirits.

8. But a staff only. In Mt. and Lk. we have: "not even a staff." We must read the passage as expressing the mind of our Lord generally, and not press a mere detail. He wished them simply to go as poor men.—**In their purse**—"in their girdle," which was used as a purse for small money. Notice the gradual increase in the details of the command: "take no bread, no bag in which to put what you buy, in fact, no money with which to buy anything." The best readings put "no bread" *before* "no scrip."

9. They should not put on two coats. According to Mt. and Lk. they are not to procure two coats, nor to possess them. To have two coats was a mark of comparative wealth. (Cp. Lk. iii. 11.) Our Lord touchingly alludes to the effect of these commands in Lk. xxii. 35. To those "who seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, all things are added" (Mt. vi. 33).

10. Wheresoever you shall enter. We learn from Mt. that the house was not to be chosen haphazard, but after careful inquiry as to "who in that city was worthy."—**There abide.** St. Paul closely followed this rule on his missionary journeys. (Cp. Acts xvi. 15; xviii. 7.)

11. Nor hear you—"nor even give you a hearing."—**Shake off the dust from your feet**—"shake off at once," without further thought. The Jews were accustomed on returning to Judæa from Gentile lands to shake the dust from off their feet in token of renunciation of all communication with heathenism. St. Paul carried out our Lord's directions to the letter on leaving Antioch in Pisidia (Acts xiii. 51). Garments were sometimes shaken with the same purpose (Acts xviii. 6).—**For a testimony**

And going forth they preached that men should do **12** penance:

And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil **13** many that were sick, and healed them.

And king Herod heard (for his name was made **14** manifest), and he said: John the Baptist is risen again from the dead, and therefore mighty works show forth themselves in him.

to them. Mt. (x. 15) adds our Lord's striking words: "Amen I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city."

12. Should do penance—and should continue to do so—such is the force of the Greek. Their change of life was to be permanent. Penance, or a change of mind and purpose, had been the chief theme of the Prophets in their preaching concerning the coming of the Messias: "Rejoice not, thou my enemy over me, because I am fallen: I shall arise, when I sit in darkness, the Lord is my light: I will bear the wrath of the Lord, because I have sinned against him" (Mich. vii. 8, 9). And this was continued by St. John the Baptist: "do penance" was his one theme, while the first words of our Lord were "repent, and believe the Gospel" (Mk. i. 15). The Apostles, therefore, did but follow in the footsteps of those who had gone before them.

13. They cast out—anointed—healed. All three verbs are in the imperfect tense, denoting that the cases were by no means isolated, as is shown also by the repetition of the word "many." —**Anointed with oil many that were sick**—peculiar to Mk. This, of course, was not Extreme Unction, though it may well be regarded as a foreshadowing of it (Bellarmine). Anointing with oil was much in use among the Jews for curative purposes. (Cp. Lk. x. 34.) In these cases it was a fitting symbol of the cures effected by the Apostles. Our Lord never used any symbol in effecting his cures except the touch of his hands or saliva (Jn. ix. 6).

14. And King Herod heard. Mt. adds: "the fame of Jesus"; Lk. adds: "all things that were done by him." (Cp. Mt. xiv. 1; Lk. ix. 6.) This close connection of Herod's remark with the mission of the Twelve and its results is peculiar to Mk. The Herod here spoken of was Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great. He was at this time tetrach of Galilee. He afterwards tried our Lord, and clothed him with a white robe during his Passion (Lk. xxiii. 2). Our Lord, in speaking of him, called him "a fox" (Lk. xiii. 32). It was not merely the miracles of our Lord at Capharnaum, but also the stir throughout all Galilee and the great diffusion of the movement caused by the mission of the Twelve, which attracted the attention of Herod.—**Made manifest**—with emphasis on the "made." Notoriety was inevitable, though our Lord tried to avoid it: "he could not be

- 15 And others said: It is Elias. But others said: It is a prophet, as one of the prophets.
- 16 Which Herod hearing, said: John whom I beheaded, he is risen again from the dead.
- 17 For Herod himself had sent and apprehended John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias the wife of Philip his brother, because he had married her.

hid" (Mk. vii. 24).—And he said. Another and a better reading has: "they said"—*i.e.*, this was the common talk among people.—Is risen again. Though Herod was a Sadducee, and had no belief in the resurrection from the dead, he here allows his guilty conscience to rise superior to his belief.—Mighty works. In life St. John worked no miracles: "John, indeed, did no sign" (Jn. x. 41); but now that he is risen from the dead, as Herod imagined, "mighty powers" of a miraculous kind might well be expected from him.

15. As one of the prophets—*i.e.*, the equal of any of the great prophets of old. The return of Elias before the coming of the Messias was a common belief: "Behold, I will send Elias the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal. iv. 5). (Cp. Mk. ix. 10.) The name of Jeremias was also closely connected with the Jewish hope of some revival of the prophetic order. (Cp. Mt. xvi. 14.) Their hope seems to have been based on the words of Moses (Deut. xviii. 15): "The Lord thy God will raise up to thee a Prophet of thy nation and of thy brethren like unto me; him thou shalt hear"—words which, of course, have reference to our Lord.

16. Whom I beheaded. Notice the hideous boast in these words. (Cp. Mt. xiv. 2.) The emphasis on the "I" is well maintained in the next verse by the phrase: "For Herod himself."—He is risen—"the selfsame is risen."

17. In prison—*i.e.*, at Machaerus, in Peraea, on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea, where Herod had a beautiful castle. Mk.'s account of the beheading of St. John is far more full and vivid than that of Mt., while Lk. does not record it at all. St. John was thus beheaded in sight of the scenes of his early work and preaching. It is strange that Moses and St. John, the first and the last of the prophets, with thirteen centuries between them, closed their lives almost on the same spot. Within sight also was the scene of the translation of Elias.—Herodias. She was the daughter of Aristobulus, son of Herod the Great, and had originally been the wife of Herod Philip I., till she was forcibly taken from him by his brother Herod Antipas. This marriage, at once adulterous and by the Mosaic law doubly incestuous (for she was niece to both her husbands), shocked the conscience of all the stricter Jews. It eventually involved Antipas in a war with the father of the wife whom he had dismissed, and it is probably in connection with this war that we read of soldiers on duty

For John said to Herod: It is not lawful for thee to **18** have thy brother's wife.

Now Herodias laid snares for him: and was desirous **19** to put him to death, and could not.

For Herod feared John, knowing him to be a just and **20** holy man: and kept him, and when he heard him, did many things: and he heard him willingly.

And when a convenient day was come, Herod made a **21** supper for his birthday, for the princes, and tribunes, and chief men of Galilee.

as coming under the teaching of St. John the Baptist (Lk. iii. 14). The prophetic spirit of St. John, the very spirit of Elias in his dealings with Achab and Jezabel, made him the bold spokesman of the general feeling, and thus brought him within range of the vindictive bitterness of the guilty queen.—**Philip his brother.** He was tetrach (*i.e.*, the ruler of a fourth part) of Ituraea and Trachonitis, to the east of the Sea of Galilee. (Cp. Lk. iii. 1.)

18. John said—"kept on saying"—*i.e.*, whenever he met Herod, this is what he said to him.—**Thy brother's wife**—more explicit than "her" in Mt.

19. Now Herodias laid snares for him—peculiar to Mk. The Greek gives us exactly the English provincialism "to have it in with (or 'for') a man." It occurs again in Lk. xi. 53. Others render it "she kept her eye on him," or "she did not relax her hostility to him." The vindictiveness of Herodias against St. John could be relieved only by his death. The three verbs "laid snares," "was desirous," and "could," are all imperfects in the Greek, denoting the long-continued malicious attitude of Herodias towards St. John. She was watching her opportunity, and at last it came.

20. The whole verse is peculiar to Mk. It has the ring of real life. The attitude of King Achab towards Elias is remarkably similar (3 Kings xix. 1, 2). Cp., too, the conduct of King Sedecias to the Prophet Jeremias (Jer. xxxii. 2, and xxxvii. 16).—**Knowing**—"knowing full well."—**Kept him**—"protected him"—*i.e.*, from being killed by Herodias. Others render the verb "venerated him" or "studied his convenience," but the Greek will not bear this.—**Did many things**—*i.e.*, which he otherwise would not have done. A better reading gives the sense as: "was anxious about many things"—*i.e.*, which he had done. His conscience pricked him severely after his conversations with St. John. Cp. Felix and St. Paul (Acts xxiv. 25, 26).

21. A convenient day—*i.e.*, convenient for the plot of Herodias.—**For the princes and tribunes, and the chief men of Galilee**—peculiar to Mk. The inference has been drawn from these words that the banquet took place in Galilee, and not at Machaerus.

- 22** And when the daughter of the same Herodias had come in, and had danced, and pleased Herod, and them that were at table with him, the king said to the damsel: Ask of me what thou wilt, and I will give it thee.
- 23** And he swore to her: Whatsoever thou shalt ask I will give thee, though it be the half of my kingdom.
- 24** Who when she was gone out, said to her mother: What shall I ask? But she said: The head of John the Baptist.

But this is quite an unnecessary assumption, and entirely does away with the power and vividness of the scene. What more likely than that Herod should have invited these "chief men" to come from Galilee to Machaerus to keep his birthday feast with him? The princes, or magnates, would be the chief civil dignitaries from Galilee, while the tribunes were the chief military men. (Cp. Apoc. vi. 15.) The word rendered "tribunes" means, literally, the captain of a thousand men.

22. The daughter of the same Herodias. Her name was Salome. There is much force in the Greek words rendered "the same Herodias." "Dancing of this licentious kind was rarely, if ever, performed by women of rank, or even respectability. It was reserved for professionals. And thus the Greek here emphasises that she who thus danced and degraded herself was none other than one of royal blood!" She stooped even to this low level. —Ask of me what thou wilt. Such reckless promises were not unusual, and, of course, were not meant to be taken seriously. Compare the case of King Assuerus and Queen Esther. "What dost thou desire should be given thee? although thou shouldst ask the half of my kingdom, thou shalt have it" (Esther v. 6). Cp. Lk. xix. 8.

23. The whole verse is peculiar to Mk.

24. What shall I ask? The force of the Greek is: "What *am* I to ask for myself?" (deliberative subjunctive). Herod had twice used strongly the word "ask" to her, and some personal advantage was doubtless uppermost in her mind. —But she said. It is as though the mother of Salome said: "Ask nothing for yourself at all; you know well what I want; go at once to the King, and demand the head of John the Baptist." "Thus was she instructed by her mother," as Mt. says! —The head. Nothing short of this would suffice. And there must be no delay, no time for reflection or change of purpose. If Herod be allowed time to become sober, he might change his mind. The whole verse is wondrously vivid and pictorial: the agitation of both mother and daughter are depicted to the life. Herodias shall know of St. John's death in a way that shall make her know it for certain; and she shall own the head that contained the tongue that denounced her iniquities!

And when she was come in immediately with haste **25**
to the king, she asked saying: I will that forthwith thou
give me in a dish the head of John the Baptist.

And the king was struck sad. Yet because of his **26**
oath, and because of them that were with him at table,
he would not displease her:

But sending an executioner, he commanded that his **27**
head should be brought in a dish.

And he beheaded him in prison, and brought his head **28**
in a dish: and gave it to the damsel, and the damsel
gave it to her mother.

Which his disciples hearing came, and took his body, **29**
and laid it in a tomb.

And the apostles coming together unto Jesus, related **30**
to him all things that they had done and taught.

25. Immediately—with haste—forthwith! The words suggest their own picture.—**In a dish.** The banquet would suggest the use of a dish. The dish or platter specified would be a large one. It is as though Salome said: "give it to me in one of these very dishes you are using." This demand for the immediate delivery of the head seems conclusively to fix the banquet as having taken place at Machaerus.

26. Sad—"exceeding sad."—**Because of his oath**—"because of his oaths," for he had repeated them many times. Wine makes men loquacious and bombastic.—**Displease**—"break faith with," or "disappoint."

27. But sending. The Greek has "immediately" here. "Immediately having dispatched."—**An executioner.** The word occurs only here in N.T. Mt. has merely "sending," with no mention of the executioner. A veil is drawn over the treatment which the head received at the hands of Herodias and Salome. The chief relics of St. John the Baptist are at the Cathedral of Amiens.—**In a dish.** These words are absent from some MSS.

28. And he beheaded him in prison. Cp. Acts vii. 52. Note the four short broken sentences in this verse, each introduced by "and."

29. His disciples—*i.e.*, St. John's disciples. Mt. adds: "they came and told Jesus." For our Lord's eulogy of St. John, cp. Lk. vii. 27, 28.

30. The apostles. The disciples have now earned this title by their labours. It is only here that St. Mark gives it to them.—**Coming together**—"come together," from different parts—a vivid present: first one pair arrives, then another, until all have returned.—**All things that they had done**—*i.e.*, all the miracles they had worked. (Cp. Lk. ix. 7.)—**And taught**—

- 31 And he said to them: Come apart into a desert place, and rest a little. For there were many coming and going; and they had not so much as time to eat.
- 32 And going up into a ship, they went into a desert place apart.
- 33 And they saw them going away, and many knew: and they ran flocking thither on foot from all the cities, and were there before them.

peculiar to Mk. The full sentence should be: "all they had done, and all they had taught." Cp. "all things which Jesus began to do and to teach" (Acts i. 1).

31. Come apart—"come ye apart, by yourselves, quite privately." The Greek is remarkably full and explicit. Our Lord feared for the humility of his own. Their success on the mission, in working miracles and generally drawing men to themselves by their preaching, might make them proud and self-satisfied, and help them to imagine that it was by their own strength and power that great things for God had been effected. So our Lord urges them at once to a kind of retreat—to a time of retirement and prayer—"not minding high things, but consenting to the humble" (Rom. xii. 16). He did the same in the case of the seventy-two disciples on their return from their mission, when he at once read them a stern warning against spiritual pride (Lk. x. 17-21). The whole verse is peculiar to Mk. and quite in his style; it furnishes yet another glimpse of the inner life of our Lord with his chosen disciples. (Cp. Iv. 10, iv. 34.)—There were many coming and going—"those who were coming and those who were going were many"—the Greek depicts clearly the two streams of people. (Cp. Mk. xi. 9.) "The Pasch, the festival day of the Jews, was near at hand" (Jn. vi. 4), and the pilgrim companies would be on their way to Jerusalem.

32. Going up into a ship. They crossed the Sea of Galilee, and proceeded in the direction of Bethsaida Julias, at its north-eastern corner, just above the entrance of the Jordan into it. To the south of the town was a green and narrow plain, with "much grass," and abundant space for the multitude to sit down. (Cp. Lk. ix. 10, 11.)—Into a desert place. St. John says "Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples" (Jn. vi. 3).

33. The whole verse is peculiar to Mk., and gives a most vivid picture in its four disjointed sentences of the eagerness of the people to be with our Lord, and to hear him. Their motive is given by Jn. (vi. 2).—Were there before them. The journey across the lake would only be about four miles, by land it would be about ten. Perhaps there was a wind against them, and so the foot passengers got there first, but the contrast chiefly emphasized is between the somewhat leisurely rowing on the water, and the eager running of these on land.

And Jesus going out saw a great multitude: and he had 34
compassion on them, because they were as sheep not
having a shepherd, and he began to teach them many
things.

And when the day was now far spent, his disciples 35
came to him, saying: This is a desert place, and the hour
is now past:

Send them away, that going into the next villages 36
and towns, they may buy themselves meat to eat.

And he answering said to them: Give you them to eat. 37

34. And Jesus going out—*i.e.*, leaving his retirement on the mountain. Lk. adds that our Lord "welcomed them" gladly (Lk. ix. 11).—Because they were as sheep not having a shepherd—peculiar to Mk., and one of his most tender "touches." The same phrase occurs in another context in Mt. ix. 36, and is found more than once in the O.T. Read specially Ezech. xxxiv. Our Lord's pastoral office is mentioned in Heb. xiii. 20, and 1 Pet. ii. 25.—Began to teach them many things. Our Lord now delivered a long discourse on "the Kingdom of God," which detained them till "the day began to decline" (Lk. ix. 11). It was near the time of the spring equinox so the sun would set about 6 p.m., and the miracle take place an hour or so before sunset. The thought of feeding the multitude, as St. John says, had been present to the mind of our Lord from the moment when "he lifted up his eyes, and saw that a very great multitude cometh to him," and the same writer represents the conversation as to how to feed the multitude as having been started by our Lord, not by the disciples. This miracle is the only one of which we have an account in all four Gospels (Mt. xiv., Mk. vi., Lk. ix., and Jn. vi.). The account given by St. John should be specially studied, together with the discourse there given on the Blessed Sacrament, which our Lord based on the miracle he had worked.

35. There is something laboured and heavy in these remarks of the disciples; they express nothing but what was most obvious, and are the words of men who are getting tired and hungry, and desire rest. They are spoken in a somewhat selfish vein, with none of our Lord's spirit of compassion and thoughtfulness for others.

36. Send them away—*i.e.*, we have had enough and to spare of their society. But our Lord's words are the very reverse: "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavily laden, and I will refresh you!"—They may buy themselves meat. Lk. adds "they may procure lodging," an important additional point, especially as there were women and children in the company.

37. And he—"but he"—a contrast to the suggestion that had been made.—Give you them to eat. Mt. adds "they have no need to go," which is our Lord's reply to "send them

And they said to him: Let us go and buy bread for two hundred pence, and we will give them to eat.

38 And he saith to them: How many loaves have you? go and see. And when they knew, they say: Five, and two fishes.

39 And he commanded them that they should make all sit down by companies upon the green grass.

away" (verse 36), even as the emphatic "you" makes answer to the words: "buy for themselves" (verse 36).—**Let us go and buy.** These words may well be read as an ironical question, coming from men who felt they are being overtaxed, and wish to point out the absurdity or impossibility of what they are asked to do. It is as though they said: "So we are to go and spend two hundred pence on bread for these people, are we? We have not got the money, and if we had it would not purchase sufficient for all these."—**Two hundred pence**=two hundred *denarii*. The *denarius*, the chief silver coin of the day, had originally the value of 8½d., but later only a value of 7½d. It was the day wages of a labourer in Palestine. Thus, 200 *denarii* are worth about £6 5s. In St. John's narrative we read that St. Philip answered our Lord, saying: "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is *not sufficient* for them, that everyone may take *a little*."—**We will give them to eat.** Another reading gives the meaning: "then perhaps we may be able to give them to eat"—the disciples still speaking ironically to our Lord.

38. **How many loaves have you?** The disciples were not called upon to devise new and startling schemes; they were to learn a lesson of how to make the best of what they had. (Cp. 2 Cor. viii. 12.) For a miracle of this kind in the O.T., cp. 4 Kings iv. 42-44.—**Go and see**=**"Go, see"**—two sharp and quick imperatives—a touch of St. Mark.—**When they knew**=**"when they had ascertained."** The discovery was made by St. Andrew, and the supply belonged to a boy. St. John alone mentions that the cakes were made of barley-flour—*i.e.* of the coarsest and the cheapest kind, the food of the working-man. For the relative values of wheat and barley, cp. Apoc. vi. 6. The fish were a mere relish, and would probably be cooked or pickled.—**Five, and two fishes.** The words were spoken almost with contempt, for "what are these among so many?"

39. **They should make them all sit down.** For so large a crowd to obey such an order was a great act of trust on their part in our Lord, before whose eyes there is now no disorderly multitude, but as it were a large family, all in order, contented, and at rest. **By companies.** Lk. has "by fifties in a company."—**The green grass**—a touch of St. Mark. Jn. says: "there was much grass in the place." The colour, mentioned alone by Mk., marks the season of the year—*viz.*, the early spring before the summer-heat had burnt the grass.

And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds and by 40
fifties.

And when he had taken the five loaves, and the two 41
fishes: looking up to heaven, he blessed, and broke the
loaves, and gave to his disciples to set before them: and
the two fishes he divided among them all.

And they all did eat, and had their fill. 42

And they took up the leavings, twelve full baskets of 43
fragments, and of the fishes.

And they that did eat, were five thousand men. 44

And immediately he obliged his disciples to go up into 45

40. **By hundreds and by fifties**—peculiar to Mk.—**In ranks.** The Greek word means literally “garden-beds,” and adds a picturesque touch to the scene. The companies on the green grass would look like so many flower-beds in a garden, while the division into “hundreds and fifties” would make the counting quite a simple matter. “As they sat in these orderly groups upon the grass, the gay red, blue, and yellow colours of the clothing, which the poorest Orientals wear, might well call up in the imagination of St. Peter a multitude of flower-beds in some well-cultivated garden.”

41. **When he had taken.** This action marked our Lord as the host and master of the feast. (Cp. Mk. xiv. 22; Lk. xxiv. 30; Acts xxvii. 35.)—**The five loaves and the two fishes**—*i.e.*, all there was to be had, for our Lord is “a jealous God” (Exod. xx. 5).—**Looking up to heaven.** This is mentioned in Mt., Mk., and Lk. It was the attitude of prayer. (Cp. Jn. xi. 41; Mk. vii. 34.)—**He blessed.** This, too, is mentioned in Mt., Mk, and Lk. Jn. has “when he had given thanks.”—**And gave**—“and continued to give.” The Apostles would keep on coming to our Lord for further supplies, and there was always plenty. All had “as much as they wished for.” In the hands of the Apostles the bread was multiplied in the same way as “the pot of meal did not waste, nor the cruse of oil become diminished” in the house of the widow of Sarephta (3 Kings xvii. 14), in the same way that at the prayer of Eliseus a small quantity of oil was multiplied and filled many vessels (4 Kings iv. 1-7). **And the two fishes**—though there were only two! Both Mk. and Jn. make special mention of the distribution of the fish.

43. **Twelve baskets.** The Greek word is “*cophinoi*”—*i.e.*, small baskets for carrying food for a short journey. The same word is used by all four Evangelists.—**And of the fishes.** Mk. alone mentions the details that among the fragments were portions of the fish.

44. **Men.** Mt. adds: “besides women and children,” who would not sit with the men, but sit or stand apart.

45. **Immediately**—yes, for the effect of the miracle was very great. “This is of a truth the prophet that is to come into the

the ship, that they might go before him over the water to Bethsaida whilst he dismissed the people.

46 And when he had dismissed them, he went up to the mountain to pray.

47 And when it was late, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and himself alone on the land.

48 And seeing them labouring in rowing (for the wind was against them), and about the fourth watch of the night, he cometh to them walking upon the sea, and he would have passed by them.

world," they exclaimed, and their intention was "to take our Lord by force and make him king." So our Lord "obliged" (a strong word, and the test to their loyalty and obedience was indeed a severe one) the Twelve to leave him, though it was now late at night. "His Kingdom is not of this world," and he would show this to be the case by dismissing at once those who would be his chief courtiers, and thus seek to dispel from the minds of his chosen disciples all idea of an earthly kingdom.—To Bethsaida—*i.e.*, to the western Bethsaida, the town of Philip, Andrew, and Peter, in the neighbourhood of Capharnaum. The mention of the name is peculiar to Mk.

46. Dismissed—"bidden farewell to them." The Greek word here is different to the one translated "dismissed" in verse 45, and is frequently used of bidding farewell to friends. (Cp. Acts xviii. 18, 21, and 2 Cor. ii. 13.)

47. And when it was late. "It was now dark," says St. John, "and Jesus was not come unto them" (Jn. vi. 17). Notice the two touches of St. Mark: "in the midst of the sea," and "labouring in rowing"—clearly from the lips of St. Peter.

48. Seeing—*i.e.*, in the moonlight, for it was Paschal—that is, full-moon time.—The wind was against them. Jn. calls it "a great wind." Mt. (xiv. 24) makes more special mention of the storm.—About the fourth watch—*i.e.*, between 3 and 6 a.m. The proper Jewish reckoning recognized only three watches, for which sentinels remained on duty. But after the Roman supremacy, the number was increased to four, sometimes described by the numerical order, as here; sometimes by the terms (1) evening, (2) midnight, (3) cockcrowing, (4) morning.—He cometh to them. St. John says that when they caught sight of our Lord, they had rowed "about five-and-twenty or thirty furlongs." The lake was forty furlongs broad. How weary they must have been! The day before had been a long one, crowned by the fatigue involved in the distribution of the loaves to so many; and now they had been out in the storm on the lake for many hours, hardly able to make any headway at all. Surely our Lord might have spared them this painful experience, or gone to their aid sooner. But the Good Shepherd

But they seeing him walking upon the sea, thought it 49 was an apparition, and they cried out.

For they all saw him, and were troubled. And imme- 50 diately he spoke with them, and said to them: Have a good heart, it is I, fear ye not.

And he went up to them into the ship, and the wind 51 ceased: and they were far more astonished within themselves:

For they understood not concerning the loaves: for 52 their heart was blinded.

And when they had passed over, they came into the 53 land of Genesareth, and set to the shore.

says: "I know mine, and mine know me." He would teach them patience, and that endurance is the Christian's portion. (Cp. James i. 4; Apoc. xiv. 12.)—He would have passed by them—peculiar to Mk. Cp. "He made as though he would go further" (Lk. xxiv. 28). But all "this he did to try them, for he himself knew what he would do" (Jn. vi. 6).

49. Thought it was an apparition. Cp. Lk. xxiv. 37.—They cried out—a shriek of terror. The mention of this cry is peculiar to Mk.

50. For they all saw him—a touch of St. Mark. It was not the fancy of an individual.—He spoke with them. Cp. Lk. xxiv. 37; Apoc. i. 17, 18.—It is I. "See ye that I alone am, and there is no other God besides me: I will kill, and I will make to live: I will strike and I will heal, and there is none that can deliver out of my hand" (Deut. xxxii. 39). "I am the Lord, and there is no saviour besides me" (Is. xliii. 11).

51. He went up to them. The Greek verb depicts the climb from the hollow of the wave over the side of the boat. St. Mark here passes over the incident of St. Peter walking on the waters to meet our Lord, probably because it tends to the credit of St. Peter. It is given fully by St. Matthew (xiv. 28-31).—And they were far more astonished within themselves. These words and the whole of verse 52 are peculiar to St. Mark, who is always specially full in describing the emotions. According to Mk., their astonishment found no expression in words, but Mt. says that "they came and adored him, saying: Indeed, thou art the Son of God."

52. Blinded—"hardened." So, too, in iii. 5, and viii. 17. (Cp. 2 Cor. iii. 14; Eph. iv. 18.)

53. The land of Genesareth. The violence of the wind had thus diverted the course of the ship several miles, for according to verse 45 it was to Bethsaida they had intended to row. The land of Genesareth is mentioned only here and in Mt. xiv. 34, where it is called "the country of Genesar." "It is a fertile crescent-shaped plain, on the north-western shore of the lake,

- 54 And when they were gone out of the ship, immediately they knew him:
- 55 And running through that whole country, they began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.
- 56 And whithersoever he entered, into towns or into villages or cities, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch but the hem of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.

about three miles in length and one in width, lying just south of Capharnaum. From its sheltered situation, and especially from its depression of more than 500 feet below the level of the sea, its climate is of an almost tropical character. The visitor may still find much to admire—the pearly whiteness of the shell-strewn beach, the thickets of oleander blossoming along the water-courses, the profusion of wild flowers, the fine cliffs which guard the two extremities of the plain, and then recede to join the Galilaean hills.” What a haven of rest after the stormy night on the Lake! But it was not to be for long. —Set to the shore—*i.e.*, they brought the boat to her moorings, casting anchor, or tying the boat to a post on the shore.

54. Immediately they knew him. It can hardly have been daylight, and yet there were many already about, waiting for a chance visit from our Lord!—**They knew him**—“they recognized him,” and the news of his presence spread with lightning speed. We can thus read between the lines the enthusiasm for our Lord which had seized so many in those parts.

55. Perhaps no passage in this Gospel so perfectly illustrates St. Mark’s vivid and pictorial style as this verse and the next. The excitement of the multitude, their anxiety to know where our Lord was, and the rapidity of his movements from place to place are produced to the life. St. Matthew’s shorter account of the same scenes (xiv. 35, 36) is quite tame in comparison. Notice the following phrases specially: (1) running, (2) that whole country, (3) in beds, (4) where they heard he was, (5) the sick in the streets.—**Where they heard he was**—“wherever they heard that he is.” The present tense is most vivid here, as though one caught the reply of those of whom inquiry was made: “Have you seen him? do you know where he is?” “Yes, he is over there.” For the scene, cp. Acts v. 15.

56. **Towns, or villages, or cities.** The combination of the three covers every collection of dwellings, large and small.—**Were made whole.** The verb is in the imperfect tense, pointing to the rapid succession and number of the cases healed. It was now that our Lord gave his long discourse on the Bread of Life, as narrated by St. John (vi. 25-72).

CHAPTER VII

OUR LORD REBUKES THE DOCTRINE OF THE PHARISEES—
THE SYRO-PHOENICIAN WOMAN—THE HEALING OF
ONE DEAF AND DUMB

AND there assembled together unto him the Pharisees **1**
and some of the scribes, coming from Jerusalem.

And when they had seen some of his disciples eat **2**
bread with common, that is, with unwashed hands, they
found fault.

For the Pharisees, and all the Jews eat not without **3**
often washing their hands, holding the tradition of the
ancients:

1. Assembled—"are assembling"—a vivid present. The Greek implies that their purpose was unfriendly.—**The Pharisees.** We have heard nothing of these since iii. 6, and probably those mentioned here are newcomers. The same is probably true of the Scribes, who apparently were not so fully represented as the Pharisees. The form of the phrase suggests that they are not the same as those mentioned in iii. 22.—**Coming from Jerusalem.** While those in the neighbourhood of Capharnaum are all enthusiasm for our Lord, and "wish to make him their King," these men, well-informed in the Law, well-versed in the Prophets, make a long journey to oppose and insult him! Indeed, our Lord "came unto his own, and his own did not receive him" (Jn. i. 11). No doubt the pilgrims to Jerusalem for the recent Passover had increased our Lord's reputation, and stirred up the opposition of his enemies afresh.

2. When they had seen. They had been on the watch for something on which they could base a charge against our Lord, and have at last found this trivial circumstance. The bread eaten may have been "the fragments" from the feeding of the five thousand.—**With common, that is, with unwashed hands.** Cp. Acts x. 15; Rom. xiv. 14. Thus does St. Mark explain terms for his Roman readers, and then proceeds more fully to set forth certain Jewish practices. St. Matthew, writing for Jews, makes no such allusion. The whole of verses 3 and 4 is peculiar to Mk. (Cp. Mt. xv. 1-20.)

3. All the Jews. This refers to the Jews of Jerusalem especially—a kind of clique, who prided themselves on their careful observance of the Law and its ceremonial.—**Often.** This is probably a misreading. The best Greek MSS. have a word which means "with the fist"—i.e., to wash the hands so

- 4 And when they come from the market, unless they be washed, they eat not: and many other things there are that have been delivered to them to observe, the washing of cups and of pots, and of brazen vessels, and of beds.
- 5 And the Pharisees and scribes asked him: Why do not thy disciples walk according to the tradition of the ancients, but they eat bread with common hands?
- 6 But he answering, said to them: Well did Isaias prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.
- 7 And in vain do they worship me, teaching doctrines and precepts of men.

that one hand is rubbed with the clenched fist of the other—in other words, “diligently.”—Of the ancients—*i.e.*, of great teachers, like Hillel and Shammai, heads of rival schools, who on this point, however, had been in agreement. They flourished just before our Lord was born. (See Appendix, 1.)

4. From the market. In the market they might perchance have touched a Gentile, or someone who was ceremonially unclean.—Unless they be washed—“unless they wash themselves all over.” (Cp. Heb. x. 22.)—The washing—“the washings”—the constant washing.—Cups—ordinary drinking cups (Lk. xi. 39).—Pots—pitchers or ewers, probably made of wood or of stone. (Cp. Jn. ii. 6.)—Brazen vessels—cooking utensils.—Beds—the couches on which the Jews reclined at their meals. This addition is not found in all MSS.

5. Asked him. The Greek verb implies that they put the question in a hostile and rude way.—Why do not thy disciples walk. Mk. alone among the Synoptists uses the word “walk” in this metaphorical sense; but it occurs thus frequently in Jn. (cp. Jn. viii. 12; xii. 35), also in St. Paul (cp. Rom. viii. 4; xiv. 15; 2 Cor. x. 2, 3; Eph. ii. 2).

6. But he answering. Our Lord’s answer consists of two parts, verses 6-8 and verses 9-13. St. Matthew inverts the order, and perhaps it may be said that the stern word “hypocrites” (the only time it occurs in St. Mark) comes better *after* the exposure of their inconsistency. The time had come for plain speaking. The word “answering” is omitted in some MSS.—Well did Isaias. The reference is to Is. xxix. 13. For our Lord’s use of the word “well” in this semi-ironical sense, cp. Jn. iv. 17.

7. In vain. The words are emphatic by position. (Cp. James i. 26.)—Doctrines and precepts of men. There is no Greek for the word “and” here. The Greek words mean: “you teach as doctrines things which are merely the precepts of men.” St. Paul uses the same phrase in Col. ii. 22. The Greek word for “doctrine” is not the usual one, and implies rather a course

For leaving the commandment of God, you hold the 8 tradition of men, the washings of pots and of cups: and many other things you do like to these.

And he said to them: Well do you make void the 9 commandment of God, that you may keep your own tradition.

For Moses said: Honour thy father and thy mother; 10 and He that shall curse father or mother, dying let him die.

But you say: If a man shall say to his father or mother, 11 Corban (which is a gift), whatsoever is from me, shall profit thee.

of instruction manufactured, as it were, for a definite purpose, rather than any revealed truth. The frequent use of the plural points to the great multiplicity of details and enactments which the Pharisees had formulated in course of time. "I saw and there was no one among them even to consult, or who, when I asked, could answer a word. Behold they are all in the wrong, and their works are vain: their idols are wind and vanity" (Is. xli. 28, 29).

8. Leaving="dismissing," almost "despising."—The command of God. Cp. 2 Pet. ii. 21. The singular form stands in marked contrast to the plurals in the previous verse. (Cp. 1 Tim. vi. 14.) "All the law is fulfilled in *one* word," says St. Paul: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Gal. v. 14). "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. xiii. 10).—You hold="you cling to."—Tradition of men. In many versions the verse comes to an end here, and the rest, which is peculiar to Mk., is left out.

9. Well="admirably," spoken ironically, as in verse 6. Notice the strong contrast between "make void" and "keep." The word "keep" has the force of "carefully observe."

10. For Moses said. The words are quoted partly from Exodus xx. 12, and partly from Exodus xxi. 17. (Cp. also Deut. v. 16; xxvii. 16; Lev. xx. 9.) Mt. (xv. 3) has: "For God said."

11. But you say: very emphatic, in contrast with "For Moses said," in verse 10. (Cp. Jn. v. 45-47.)—Corban is a Hebrew word meaning "a gift." (Cp. Mt. xxvii. 6.) It is found only in St. Mark. The passage as it stands is a mistranslation, and gives no sense. It should be translated: "If a man shall say to his father or mother: Let whatsoever of mine *might* be of profit to thee be Corban [that is, a gift] . . ." (he is then free, according to *your* tradition, from any obligation "to do anything further for his father or mother"). This omission of the apodosis is quite according to Jewish usage in such maxims. In other words, if one man said to another: "Let this thing be Corban *to thee*,"

- 12 And further you suffer him not to do anything for his father or mother.
- 13 Making void the word of God, by your own tradition, which you have given forth. And many other such things you do.
- 14 And calling again the multitude unto him, he said to them: Hear ye me all, and understand.
- 15 There is nothing from without a man that entering into him, can defile him. But the things which come from a man, those are they that defile a man.

his words were considered to have the effect of making it sacrilegious for the person to whom they were addressed to touch the thing in question. "Accordingly," says our Lord, "though they were bound to support their parents in need, they could, by this absurd tradition, *evade* the duty, by simply saying to them: 'Let everything of mine which might be a help to you, be Corban.'" After saying this, they pleaded that the fear of sacrilege prevented them from contributing to the support of their needy parents; but, as they had not included *themselves* in the ban, they *could* continue to apply the goods or the money to their own use.

12. And further. Omit the "and."—**Anything**—emphatic, "not even the smallest service."

13. Making void. The Greek word used here is far stronger than the one translated "making void" in verse 9. It means "repealing" or "annihilating." The contrast between the two verbs is well seen in Gal. iii. 15, 17.—Which you have given forth—"which you have handed down."—And many other suchlike things you do—peculiar to Mk.

14. The multitude. Probably many of these had gathered around our Lord during his interview with the Scribes and Pharisees. He has finished with these now; he has given them much to think about, and his words to them have opened the way for the enunciation of important principles, and these he wishes *all* to hear. So he gladly welcomes others once more at his side. Mt. omits the word "again," and is less emphatic than Mk. in the remainder of the verse, having only the words: "Hear ye and understand."—Me all—both words are very emphatic, just before the great principle of verse 15 is enunciated. Our Lord lays down the converse of this principle, viz., that nothing merely external can purify, in Mt. xxiii. 25, 26.

15. The truth taught by these words, though so familiar to us, must have sounded strange to the Jews, who were taught by the Law of Moses to distinguish carefully between clean and unclean meats. (Cp. Acts x. 14.) Hence the word "nothing" is most emphatic.—Which come from a man. The pointed repetition of the noun "man" instead of using the pronoun is quite in keeping with St. Mark's strong and vivid style.

If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. 16

And when he was come into the house from the multitude, his disciples asked him the parable. 17

And he saith to them: So are you also without knowledge? Understand you not that everything from without, entering into a man, cannot defile him: 18

Because it entereth not into his heart, but goeth into the belly, and goeth out into the privy, purging all meats? 19

But he said that the things which come out from a man, they defile a man. 20

16. The best Greek MSS. omit this verse.

17. When he was come into the house—peculiar to Mk. The house was probably St. Peter's house at Capharnaum.—His disciples asked. St. Matthew says it was St. Peter that put the question (Mt. xv. 15).—The parable. The Hebrew word means "the riddle." Our Lord had fairly puzzled his disciples, who from the first had been slow to see the lessons and force of their Master's comparisons. In the Gospels the word "parable" stands for: (a) a short saying embodying a picture—*e.g.*, Lk. iv. 23; (b) a comparison without a narrative—*e.g.*, Mk. xiii. 28; (c) a comparison embodied in a narrative between earthly and heavenly things—*e.g.*, the parable of the sower, of the prodigal son, etc.

18. So. The word stands by itself, as an expression of surprise. It practically forms a separate introductory question, as though our Lord had said: "Have you really not understood what I said?" implying that there was no real difficulty in his words.—Without knowledge—"without discernment." (Cp. Mt. viii. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 7.)—Everything from without. All things were made by God, and there is nothing which is of itself unclean or abominable in his eyes: "God saw all the things that he had made, and they were very good" (Gen. i. 31); "all the works of the Lord are exceeding good" (Ecclus. xxxix. 21). One result of our Lord's words would be the abolition of the distinction between clean and unclean articles of food. (Cp. Acts xv. 15; Rom. xiv. 2-6; Col. ii. 16; 1 Tim. iv. 3.)

19. It entereth not into his heart. That is the all-important point. "If our heart do not reprehend us, we have confidence towards God" (1 Jn. iii. 21). "Thy heart is not right in the sight of God," said St. Peter to Simon Magus (Acts viii. 21). The seed "on the good ground are they, who in a good and a very good heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience" (Lk. viii. 15).

20. But he said—"moreover he said."—Which come out from a man. Mt. narrows the phrase to "that which cometh out of the mouth."—They defile—with emphasis on "they."

- 21** For from within out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,
22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.

"Indeed they *do* defile a man." In the Greek the whole verse is in the singular: "the thing which." For the contrast between the outward and inward man, cp. 2 Cor. iv. 16.

21. Evil thoughts. St. Mark enumerates thirteen kinds of "evil things which come from within, and defile a man," while St. Matthew gives only seven, including "false testimonies," which Mk. omits. Those peculiar to Mk. are: covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness (*i.e.*, immodesty), an evil eye (*i.e.*, envy), pride, and foolishness (*i.e.*, the wrong-headedness of unbelief and sin). For similar lists of sins, cp. Rom. i. 29-32; Gal. v. 20, 21; Eph. v. 3, 4; Col. iii. 5, 6. By "evil thoughts" are meant deliberations with oneself in the hour of temptation and danger, as to which course to pursue. (Cp. Rom. i. 21; James ii. 4.)—**Adulteries.** Cp. Osee iv. 1, 2: "There is no truth and there is no mercy, and there is no knowledge of God in the land. Cursing and lying, and killing, and theft, and adultery have overflowed, and blood hath touched blood. Therefore shall the land mourn, and everyone that dwelleth in it shall languish."

22. Covetousness. Read our Lord's special warning against this evil (Lk. xii. 15), and cp. Col. iii. 5; 2 Pet. ii. 14; 1 Tim. vi. 10. **Wickedness.** This word is in the plural in the Greek, but occurs so only here and in Acts iii. 26. Otherwise it is always in the singular, and means the purpose of doing evil, "crossness, perverseness, and peevishness of action." (Cp. Eph. vi. 12.)—**Deceit.** "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile," was our Lord's special praise of Nathaniel (Jn. i. 47). Nothing did he denounce more severely than "the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy." "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Pet. ii. 22) is a summary of the praises of him who "always spoke openly to the world." (Cp. 1 Tim. iv. 2.) "Woe to you that are deep of heart, and hide your counsel from the Lord: their works are in the dark, and they say: Who seeth us, and who knoweth us?" (Is. xxix. 15).—**Lasciviousness.** Cp. Eph. iv. 19; v. 3; 1 Pet. iv. 3.—**An evil eye**—"an envious eye," which wants all for self, and grudges the goods of others. "The eye of the envious is wicked" (Ecclus. xiv. 8), and "envy is the rottenness of the bones" (Prov. xiv. 30). Cp. Rom. xiii. 13; 1 Cor. xiii. 4.—**Blasphemy**—*i.e.*, slander and detractions. (Cp. Eph. iv. 31; Col. iii. 8; 1 Tim. vi. 4.)—**Pride.** The Greek word occurs only here in N.T. (Cp. 1 Pet. v. 5; Rom. xii. 16; 1 Cor. viii. 2; Gal. vi. 3).—**Foolishness.** "The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God" (Ps. xiii. 1). "The fool will speak foolish things, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and speak to the Lord deceitfully,

All these evil things come from within, and defile a man. 23

And rising from thence he went into the borders of 24
Tyre and Sidon: and entering into a house, he would that
no man should know it, and he could not be hid.

For a certain woman, as soon as she heard of him, 25

and to make empty the soul of the hungry, and take away drink from the thirsty " (Is. xxxii. 6). " We fools esteem the life of the just madness, and their end without honour: behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints: we wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways, but the way of the Lord we have not known: we are able to show no mark of virtue, but are consumed in our wickedness " (Wisd. v. 4, 5, 7, 13). It is to such as these that our Lord here alludes. (Cp. Lk. xii. 20.)

23. And defile a man—" and do defile a man," with emphasis. Mt. adds: " But to eat with unwashed hands doth not defile a man " (xv. 18).

24. From thence—*i.e.*, from the neighbourhood of Capharnaum. The departure to places so distant as Tyre and Sidon was really a *retreat*. (Cp. Jn. vii. 1.) St. Matthew, indeed, uses the word "retired" (xv. 21). The long discourse of our Lord on the Blessed Sacrament, and this scathing denunciation of Jewish practices had perhaps made Capharnaum somewhat hostile. It was quite our Lord's way thus to leave places for a time. When persecuted in one city, he was ready to flee to another, as he later on told his disciples to do. The Good Shepherd giveth his life for his sheep, but he gives it as and when and where he pleases. When his hour is come, he will be offered in sacrifice, with desire, and because he himself so wills it, for as he said: " No man taketh away my life from me, but I lay it down of myself: and I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again " (Jn. x. 18).—The borders of Tyre and Sidon. The Greek word for "borders" is somewhat vague, and we cannot be sure how far our Lord penetrated into Phoenicia, of which Tyre and Sidon were the two chief ports. These two cities are mentioned frequently both in O.T. and N.T. They were very ancient, and of the two Tyre was the most important, and is commonly mentioned first in Scripture. In the time of our Lord, Tyre was very prosperous, deriving great wealth from the dyes of the celebrated Tyrian purple.—And entering into a house, he would have no man know it—peculiar to Mk. It is debated whether this would be the house of a Jew or of a Gentile. Certainly there were Jews in those parts, but in so far as this Gentile woman finds her way into the house without being hindered in any way, it is more probable that the house belonged to a Gentile.—But he could not be hid—a touch of St. Mark.

25. For a certain woman. The word "immediately" is here omitted after "for."—As soon as she heard of him. For the

whose daughter had an unclean spirit, came in and fell down at his feet.

26 For the woman was a Gentile, a Syro-phenician born. And she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

27 Who said to her: Suffer first the children to be filled: for it is not good to take the bread of the children, and cast it to the dogs.

phrase and all that it implies, cp. Lk. vii. 37.—**Daughter=** "little daughter." (Cp. v. 23.) The diminutive form is not, however, repeated in the next verse.

26. **The woman was a Gentile.** She probably spoke Greek as her language, and was "descended from the old stock of the Phoenicians of Syria who belonged to the Canaanites of the Old Testament—that accursed stock once doomed by God to total excision, but of which some branches had been spared by those first generations of Israel, that should have extirpated them root and branch." Everything, therefore, was against this woman, yet she was not hindered from drawing nigh, and craving the boon for which she longed.—**A Syro-phenician born.** Syro-Phoenicia (=Syrian Phoenicia) was so called to distinguish it from Liby-Phoenicia, in the north of Africa. Mt. (xv.) describes her as "a woman of Canaan," and is much more full than Mk. as to the early part of the incident, but he omits the telling words: "Suffer the children first to be filled."

27. **Who said to her.** The Greek implies that our Lord said these words to the woman more than once.—**Suffer first the children to be filled.** The "children" are, of course, the Jews. (Cp. Rom. ix. 4.) Cp. Osee (xi. 1): "Israel was a child, and I loved him"; and Jer. (xxxix. 20): "Surely Ephraim is an honourable son to me, surely he is a tender child." It was in this order that the Gospel was to be preached—to the Jews first, and then to the Gentiles. The Apostles were to be "witnesses to our Lord in Jerusalem" first, then "in all Judaea and Samaria," and then "even to the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts i. 8). Cp. Acts iii. 26; Rom. i. 16; ii. 9, 10. But now "the middle wall of partition" was yet standing (Eph. ii. 14). Yet the opportunity of the Gentiles would surely come, as our Lord implies by the word "first"; the Apostles would "turn to the Gentiles, when the Jews rejected the word of God, and judged themselves unworthy of eternal life" (Acts xiii. 46), and the prayer of this woman is that that hour be hastened and anticipated.—**And cast it to the dogs=**"and cast it to the little dogs"—i.e., to the smaller dogs attached to the household. After all, however much they be despised or ill-treated, these too have to be fed, and they live *near* the house; and so our Lord's words gave the woman at least a slight hope that something, however small, might be done for her.

But she answered and said to him: Yea, Lord: for **28** the whelps also eat under the table of the crumbs of the children.

And he said to her: For this saying go thy way, the **29** devil is gone out of thy daughter.

And when she was come into her house, she found the **30** girl lying upon the bed, and that the devil was gone out.

And again going out of the coasts of Tyre, he came by **31** Sidon to the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.

28. But she answered and said—"but she answered, and says." The Greek implies the beautiful promptitude of the woman's reply. At once she took our Lord at his word. There is a place for dogs in a household; there is surely also a place for Gentiles in the household of the Faith! The crumbs would probably be portions of soft bread, on which those at table wiped their fingers, before throwing them as food to the dogs.—Of the children. These words are only in Mk., and give great point to the reply of the woman. She has caught up our Lord's designation of the Jews as being "the children," and implies that she is quite willing to regard herself as included among "the dogs." But even the dogs, she says, "may eat the crumbs which the children throw to them." What faith and humility! No wonder our Lord pointedly replied: "*For this saying, go thy way.*" These last words come only in Mk. It has been well remarked that the case of this lonely woman not suffering our Lord "to go" until he had blest her is the greatest of the three ascending degrees of faith, as it manifests itself in the breaking through the hindrances which could keep us from him. Thus the paralytic (ii. 4) broke through mere *outward* hindrances: blind Bartimæus (x. 48) broke through hindrances opposed by *his fellow-men*; but this woman broke through hindrances *put by our Lord himself*.

29. Go thy way. Our Lord did not go to her house, and thus gave her faith a further test. Cp. for the circumstances Jn. iv. 46-53.

30. Lying upon the bed. The detail may point to the fact that the departure of the evil spirit had been attended with some violence, and thus the child's strength was exhausted. (Cp. Mk. ix. 26.) This whole verse so full of detail is peculiar to Mk.

31. He came by Sidon to the sea of Galilee. "A road led from Sidon across the hills, and climbing the ranges of the Lebanon, passed through the tetrachy of Abilina, and eventually reached Damascus. Our Lord probably left this road when it skirted Mount Hermon, and, striking south, kept on the *east* bank of the Jordan till he reached the lake. It was a long journey of about seventy-five miles."—The coasts of Decapolis. As in verse 24, the word "coasts" is vague and misleading. Here it

- 32 And they bring to him one deaf and dumb; and they besought him that he would lay his hand upon him.
- 33 And taking him from the multitude apart, he put his fingers into his ears, and spitting he touched his tongue:

means "region" or "border." Our Lord left the neighbourhood of Tyre, and went northwards, possibly passing through Sarepta (Lk. iv. 26), and so reached Sidon. On Decapolis, see v. 20.

32. **They bring to him**—a vivid present. This miracle is recorded only by St. Mark. Mt. (xv. 30) records that at this time "great multitudes came to our Lord, having with them the dumb, the blind, the lame, the maimed, and many others, and they cast them down at his feet, and he healed them." Out of these many miracles Mk. here selects one.—**Dumb.** The Greek word, which occurs only here in N.T., means "one who speaks with difficulty," and is different to the word translated "dumb" in verse 37, which means "one who cannot speak at all." The miracle is a fulfilment of prophecy. Cp. Is. xxxv. 5, 6: "God himself will come and save you, and then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped: then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be free: for waters are broken out in the desert, and streams in the wilderness."—**They besought him.** This is one of the miracles in which the friends of the sufferer bring him to our Lord. (Cp. Mk. ii. 3, and Mk. viii. 22.) **His hand.** Usually we have the plural—"his hands." But cp. Mt. ix. 18. They knew how often our Lord had already effected cures by the touch of his hand. (Cp. Mt. viii. 3, 15; ix. 25; Mk. i. 31; v. 41; vi. 5; Lk. xiii. 13.)

33. The details of this verse and of verse 34 should be carefully noted. We can only conjecture as to our Lord's motive in taking this particular man apart. As has been said, our Lord was at this very time working a large number of miracles in public, "so that the multitudes marvelled, and glorified the God of Israel," and the privacy may have been sought for the sake of the man himself, to impress him the more, and to draw him more closely to the Divine Physician. So the cure was gradual, and effected in a very ceremonial manner. May it be suggested that this man was a type in his bodily infirmity of one who neither hears the voice of God speaking to him, nor ever speaks to God in prayer. Our Lord cures such an one with great ceremonial, step by step, as though the work of such a conversion was sure to be slow and fraught with difficulty. May he, then, have wished to teach us, by "taking the man apart from the multitude," that such a conversion must needs take place in retirement, in retreat, and cannot well be effected while we are still absorbed in "the multitude" of worldly affairs? Thus our Lord's going apart from the multitude becomes a necessary part of the whole instructive ceremonial of the miracle.—**Spitting.** Cp. viii. 23, and Jn. ix. 6.

And looking up to heaven, he groaned, and said to him: **34**
Ephpheta, which is, Be thou opened.

And immediately his ears were opened, and the string **35**
of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right.

And he charged them that they should tell no man. **36**
But the more he charged them, so much the more a great
deal did they publish it.

And so much the more did they wonder, saying: He **37**
hath done all things well; he hath made both the deaf
to hear, and the dumb to speak.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FEEDING OF THE FOUR THOUSAND—THE HEALING
OF THE BLIND MAN IN EASTERN BETHSAIDA—ST.
PETER'S CONFESSION AT CAESAREA PHILIPPI

IN those days again, when there was a great multitude, **1**
and they had nothing to eat; calling his disciples
together, he saith to them:

34. And looking up to heaven. Cp. Mt. xiv. 19; Mk. vi. 41; Jn. xi. 41; xvii. 1.—**He groaned**—"he gave a deep sigh." (Cp. Mk. viii. 12; Jn. xi. 33, 38.)—**Ephpheta.** St. Mark, as on other occasions, gives the original Aramaic word used by our Lord, and then translates it. The word and the ceremonies accompanying it are now part of the ritual in administering the Sacrament of Baptism.—**Be thou opened**—"be thou thoroughly opened"—let all your senses act rightly.

35. And immediately. The word "immediately," so frequent in Mk., is wanting here in some MSS.—**He spoke right**—*i.e.*, clearly and articulately. The greatness of the miracle is emphasized by the word "right," while the perfection of his speech and hearing were the cause of the multitude's admiration.

36. The more he charged them. The verb "charged" here in the Greek is in a different tense to the one at the opening of the verse, and implies that our Lord kept on repeating his charge.

37. So much the more did they wonder. The Greek contains a word which is used only here in N.T., and no English translation can at all express the strength of the combination of words here used by St. Mark. An attempt has been made to do so as follows: "they were super-excessively filled with amazement and beside themselves."—**He hath made**—"he maketh," a vivid present, enunciating a general truth about our Lord.

1. In those days again—an indefinite phrase, pointing to a lengthened retirement on the part of our Lord in the district of

Decapolis, during which, as Mt. tells us (xv. 29, 30), our Lord worked many miracles, which caused the multitude to "marvel and to glorify the God of Israel." No wonder they stayed with him for three days.—Calling his disciples. On this occasion our Lord takes the initiative in the inquiry as to the feeding of the multitude, while in vi. 35, it was the disciples who first broached the subject. The following table will show at a glance the many striking points of contrast between the miracle of feeding the five thousand and that of feeding the four thousand.

The Five Thousand.

1. The disciples urge our Lord to dismiss the multitude, that they buy food for themselves.

2. The disciples thought it possible to buy food for at any rate a large section of the crowd.

3. The scene of the miracle must consequently have been nearer some villages or towns than in the case of the four thousand.

4. The multitude are fed on the evening of the same day on which they had followed our Lord.

5. Five loaves and two fishes are brought to our Lord as material for the miracle.

6. The multitude repose on the green grass.

7. The miracle consequently took place at a different time of the year to that of feeding the four thousand.

8. Five thousand men are fed, besides women and children.

9. Twelve baskets (cophinoi) full of fragments are taken up.

10. Our Lord made the miracle the basis of a long discourse of the Bread of Life.

11. The multitude are enthusiastic about the greatness of the miracle, and wish to take our Lord by force, and make him king.

The Four Thousand.

1. Our Lord himself calls the disciples, and speaks of the need of the multitude.

2. The disciples declare it to be out of the question to procure food for the crowd.

3. The scene of the miracle must consequently have been further from any village or town than in the case of the five thousand.

4. The multitude have been three days with our Lord before they are fed.

5. Seven loaves and a few fishes are brought to our Lord as material for the miracle.

6. The multitude repose on the bare earth.

7. The miracle consequently took place at a different time of the year to that of feeding the five thousand.

8. Four thousand men are fed, besides women and children.

9. Seven baskets (spurides) full of fragments are taken up.

10. Our Lord gave no discourse after working the miracle.

11. There is no mention of any enthusiasm concerning the miracle. Our Lord simply sent the multitude away.

I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they 2 have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat.

And if I send them away fasting to their home, they 3 will faint in the way: for some of them came from afar off.

And his disciples answered him: From whence can 4 anyone fill them here with bread in the wilderness?

And he asked them: How many loaves have ye? 5 Who said: Seven.

2. I have compassion—a strong word in the Greek, expressive of the deepest inward emotion. Our Lord uses it of the good Samaritan finding the wounded man by the roadside (Lk. x. 33), and of the father of the prodigal son, when first he met him on his return (Lk. xv. 20). Cp. also Mt. xx. 34; Mk. i. 41.—**Been with me**—"waited upon me"—a phrase indicating their growing love of our Lord and his recognition of it.

3. If I send them away fasting. This miracle occurs also in Mt. (xv. 32), who here makes our Lord say: "I will not send them away fasting."—**For some of them come from afar off**—peculiar to Mk. It is worthy of note that a large portion of these were Gentiles, and yet, though their very food was running short, they could not tear themselves away from our Lord. We read of nothing of this kind taking place in Judaea, and can only regard it as a foretaste of how gladly the Gentiles would eventually welcome the Gospel. (Cp. Acts. xiii. 48.)

4. And his disciples answered him. What a commentary does this verse afford on the words of ch. vi. 52: "For they understood not concerning the loaves, for their heart was blinded!" The difficulty raised by the Apostles is not the same as in vi. 37. On that occasion there seemed a possibility of at least procuring the necessary food, though at great expense of money and labour; but now, so far were they from towns and villages, that it was quite out of the question to buy sufficient food. They were really "in the wilderness," in the very heart of the country.

5. How many loaves have ye? The question is word for word the same as in vi. 38, and probably recalled something of what they then had witnessed to the Apostles' mind, and at least suggested the thought that our Lord might renew that deed of power and love, especially as he seemed so distressed at the want of bread for the multitude. Yet, it does not seem to have done so very fully. They merely said: "Seven," in rather a dreamy fashion. So is it always: each fresh difficulty seems insurmountable; we forget past mercies and deliverances: the graces of the past seem to furnish no ground for hope in the present crisis. "Behold the hand of the Lord is not shortened that it cannot save, neither is his ear heavy that it cannot hear"

- 6 And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and taking the seven loaves, giving thanks, he brake, and gave to his disciples, for to set before them; and they set them before the people.
- 7 And they had a few little fishes; and he blessed them, and commanded them to be set before them.
- 8 And they did eat and were filled; and they took up that which was left of the fragments, seven baskets.
- 9 And they that had eaten were about four thousand; and he sent them away.
- 10 And immediately going up into a ship with his disciples, he came into the parts of Dalmanutha.
- 11 And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, asking him a sign from heaven, tempting him.

(Is. lix. 1).—Who said: Seven. Mt. adds: "and a few little fishes."—On the ground. There is no mention now of "green grass"; the spring was past, and the hills were bare.

6. He commanded—"he commands"—a vivid present, as though our Lord wished there should be no delay. In this case our Lord himself gives the order to the people.

7. And he blessed them. This separate blessing of the little fishes is not brought out in Mt., but is a detail peculiar to Mk. Notice that the supply, both of loaves and of fishes, is greater in this miracle than in that of feeding the five thousand.

8. Seven baskets. Here there were seven large baskets. The Greek word is *spurides*, which means properly a small dinner-hamper, but sometimes they must have been of considerable size, for St. Paul (Acts ix. 25) made his escape from Damascus in one. (Cp. 2 Cor. xi. 33.)

9. About four thousand. Mt. adds: "besides children and women," as in the feeding of the five thousand.—And he sent them away—as in the former miracle. "The more excitable inhabitants of the coast-villages of the north would have taken our Lord and made him their king (Jn. vi. 15); but the men of Decapolis and the eastern shores permit him to leave without any demonstration."

10. And immediately going up into a ship. On this occasion our Lord accompanied his disciples in the boat. (Cp. vi. 45.)—Into the parts of Dalmanutha. St. Matthew, in the parallel, passage (xv. 39), says: "into the coasts of Magedan" (or "of Magdala"). Nothing is known of the position of Dalmanutha, or of Magedan, but evidently they were close together, on the western shore of the lake, some miles north of Tiberias. Some, however, consider that Dalmanutha lay five miles south of the lake, on the western side, not far from Mount Tabor.

11. And the Pharisees. Mt. adds: "and Sadducees." That they should have united in opposition to our Lord shows how

And sighing deeply in spirit, he saith: Why doth this **12** generation seek a sign? Amen I say to you, a sign shall not be given to this generation.

And leaving them, he went up again into the ship, and **13** passed to the other side of the water.

And they forgot to take bread, and they had but one **14** loaf with them in the ship.

the hostility to him had grown by now. This is the only instance in our Lord's Galilean ministry where the Sadducees are reported to have been present. For the most part they lived in Jerusalem, but a few may have been attached to the court of Herod at Tiberias.—**Began**—"began afresh."—**To question with him**—a favourite word with Mk.—**A sign from heaven.** For the request, cp. Jn. ii. 18, and vi. 30; Mt. xii. 38. Their demand was for sign of a higher order than the miracles—a visible or audible interposition of God. The words "from heaven" are emphatic. In their passion for display they hankered after a miracle such as the descent of fire from heaven, as in the case of Elias. (Cp. 1 Cor. i. 22, 23.)

12. Sighing deeply in spirit—peculiar to Mk. (Cp. Jn. xiii. 21.)—**This generation.** Emphasis should be laid on the word "this." "Why does *this* generation, which ought to expect me, and which has seen so many wonders done by me—why does *this* generation ask for further signs?" Our Lord was indignant at their petition. (Cp. Acts ii. 40; Phil. ii. 15.) In Mt. (xvi. 4) our Lord calls them "a wicked and adulterous generation." (Cp. Deut. xxxii. 5.) "They are a wicked and perverse generation. Is this the return thou makest to the Lord, O foolish and senseless people? Is not he thy father, that hath possessed thee, and made thee, and created thee?" Cp. Ps. xciv. 10: "Forty years long was I offended with that generation, and I said: These always err in heart."—**A sign shall not be given**—"If a sign shall be given to this generation": the rest is omitted—another instance of suppressed apodosis. This was the common form of Jewish oaths, and is equivalent to a solemn denial. This is the only instance of its employment in N.T., except where Ps. xciv. is quoted in Heb. iii. 11; iv. 3, 5. Mk. makes no mention of what our Lord said about the sign of Jonas the Prophet (Mt. xvi. 4).

13. Leaving them—"dismissing them." The Greek word implies a sharp dismissal, as if in anger and despair of ever doing them good. For our Lord's closing words, cp. Lk. xiii. 35.—**To the other side of the water**—i.e., to Bethsaida Julias (verse 22), on the north-eastern side of the lake.

14. They forgot to take bread. The duty of providing bread for the party probably fell to Judas (Jn. xii. 6), but in the hurry of departure nothing had been procured. Mt. (xvi. 5) places this incident when they had actually got across the water.

- 15 And he charged them saying: Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.
- 16 And they reasoned among themselves, saying: Because we have no bread.
- 17 Which Jesus knowing, saith to them: Why do you reason, because you have no bread? do you not yet know nor understand? have you still your heart blinded?
- 18 Having eyes, see you not? and having ears, hear you not? neither do you remember.
- 19 When I broke the five loaves among five thousand,

According to Mk., the discovery is made while they are still crossing over.—**And they had but one loaf**—a touch of St. Mark.

15. **He charged them**—"he kept on charging them." Our Lord was reading their thoughts all the time.—**Leaven.** The word in N.T. represents a tendency working invisibly, and, except in the parable of the leaven (Mt. xiii. and Lk. xiii.), an *evil* tendency. The leaven of the Pharisees was hypocrisy (Lk. xii. 1); the leaven of Herod was worldliness; the leaven of the Sadducees was unbelief (Mt. xvi. 6). This private interview of our Lord with the Twelve is given, as usual, far more fully and dramatically in Mk. than in Mt. Our Lord addresses no less than eight questions to his disciples in the course of five verses, the whole scene portraying him as appealing to them for more faith.—**The leaven of the Pharisees.** Mt. adds: "and of the Sadducees," but makes no mention of the "leaven of Herod." For St. Paul's use of the figure, cp. 1 Cor. v. 6-8 and Gal. v. 9.—**The leaven of Herod.** The Apostles in their preachings continued these warnings of their Master. "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, avoid" (Tit. iii. 10). Cp. 2 Jn. 10, 11; 2 Pet. ii. 1-3.

16. **They reasoned among themselves**—"they discoursed freely among themselves." The Greek word expresses an animated discussion as to what exactly had called forth our Lord's remarks.

17. **Why do you reason?** Mt. adds: "O ye of little faith." **Have you still your heart blinded?** The question is peculiar to Mk.

18. The two questions in this verse are both peculiar to Mk. (Cp. Jn. xiv. 9.) Our Lord was really quoting Jeremias (v. 21): "Hear, O foolish people, and without understanding: who have eyes, and see not; and ears, and hear not." Such people are styled "provoking" by Ezechiel (xii. 2). How much must our Lord have had to endure in this way from his disciples who were so "slow of heart"!

19. **They said to him.** Mt. does not give the answers of the Apostles to our Lord's questions in either case. Their insertion

how many baskets full of fragments took you up? They said to him, Twelve.

When also the seven loaves among four thousand, 20 how many baskets of fragments took you up? And they say to him, Seven.

And he said to them: How do you not yet understand? 21

And they came to Bethsaida; and they bring to him a 22 blind man, and they besought him that he would touch him.

And taking the blind man by the hand, he led him out 23 of the town; and spitting upon his eyes, laying his hands on him, he asked him if he saw anything.

And looking up, he said: I see men as it were trees, 24 walking.

After that again he laid his hands upon his eyes, and 25

by Mk. adds much to the vividness of the scene. The Greek words for "baskets" here and in verse 20 are again different, and correspond exactly to those used in the accounts of the two miracles.

21. How do you not yet understand?—"Do you not yet understand"—a sharp pointed question, very characteristic of our Lord with his own, leaving them now to think the matter out for themselves.

22. And they came to Bethsaida—i.e., probably to Bethsaida Julias, on the east of the lake, though some refer it to the Bethsaida near Capharnaum.—A blind man. This miracle is recorded only by St. Mark. The similarity both of language and detail with the miracle recorded in vii. 32 is remarkable. The three verbs, "came," "bring," and "besought," are all vivid presents in the Greek.—They besought him. It is noticeable that no petition to our Lord from the blind man himself is recorded. Some have thought that this omission points to a want of faith in the man, and thus accounts for the fact that our Lord healed him by stages, and not at once.

23. If he saw anything. St. Mark thus indirectly gives our Lord's actual words: "Dost thou see anything?"—implying: "I know you have not as yet got your full sight."

24. I see men as trees walking. Apparently the man had not been born blind. (Cp. Jn. ix. 1.) The full Greek gives the translation: "I see men, for I perceive objects like trees walking." There is something very pathetic in the words "looking up." It is a pictorial touch, worthy of St. Mark. The blind man had not seen for years: now at our Lord's question he *tries* to see, and *uses* his eyes quite naturally for the purpose.

25. He laid his hands again. This is one of the few instances of a strictly *progressive* cure recorded in the Gospels.—Began

he began to see, and was restored, so that he saw all things clearly.

- 26 And he sent him into his house, saying: Go into thy house, and if thou enter into the town, tell nobody.
- 27 And Jesus went out and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi. And in the way, he asked his disciples, saying to them: Whom do men say that I am?
- 28 Who answered him, saying: John the Baptist; but some Elias, and others as one of the prophets.

to see—"began to see quite clearly." The Greek verb has the force of looking fixedly at objects, so as clearly to distinguish them. He could now "focus" his sight.—**Clearly.** The Greek word thus translated occurs only here in N.T. and means "far-shining." The man meant that he could now see clearly *far and near*.

26. **Into his house.** Apparently Bethsaida was not his home. Our Lord, as on other occasions, seems to have desired those whom he healed to avoid publicity, and to seek the retirement of their own homes after their cure. (Cp. Mt. ii. 11; v. 19.)—**If thou enter into the town.** Another and a better reading has: "do not even enter into the town."

27. **And Jesus went out.** Our Lord now goes northward, a journey of some thirty miles, following the course of the Jordan, till he reached the neighbourhood of its source. It is perhaps strange and significant that he chose a spot peopled mainly by Gentiles, not by Jews, in which to mark out the constitution of his church. We have now come to a turning-point in the training of the Apostles. They had been with our Lord for upwards of two years as his constant companions, and it was now time that they should solemnly declare their faith in him as the Messiah, as the Desired of all nations, of whom the Prophets had foretold. It was also fitting that they should now be made acquainted with that function of the Messiah which ever is a scandal to men—namely, that he must suffer and die. This section of the Gospel is, therefore, of chief import in the training of the Apostles.—**Into the towns**—"into the villages around."—**Caesarea Philippi**—so called to distinguish it from Caesarea on the west coast of Palestine, and because it was the chief residence of Herod Philip II. (cp. Lk. iii. 1), who had done much to adorn it. It is situated near the sources of the Jordan, about twenty-five miles north of the Lake of Galilee.—**In the way**—a touch of St. Mark. (Cp. x. 32.)—**He asked his disciples.** Lk. (ix. 18) is careful to tell us that our Lord prayed much on this journey, so important were the matters on which in the course of it he would treat with the Twelve. Having prayed, as he did on the eve of calling them (Lk. vi. 12), he put to them this all-important question.

28. **John the Baptist.** These conjectures have already been mentioned in vi. 14, 15.—**Some Elias.** Mt. (xvi. 14) adds:

Then he saith to them: But whom do you say that I **29**
am? Peter answering said to him: Thou art the Christ.

And he strictly charged him that they should not tell **30**
any man of him.

And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must **31**
suffer many things, and be rejected by the ancients and
by the high priests, and the scribes, and be killed: and
after three days rise again.

"and others Jeremias." Few apparently in Galilee had spoken of our Lord as the Messias, though in Judaea this possibility had been freely discussed (cp. Jn. vii. 28-31, 41, and ix. 22), and even in Samaria (Jn. iv. 29), and perhaps also in Phoenicia (Mt. xv. 22).
—As one of the prophets—"that thou art one of the prophets."

29. Peter said—"Peter says"—a vivid present.—**Thou art the Christ.** All three Synoptists agree that St. Peter was here the spokesman, but his answer to our Lord is given differently in each. Mt. (xvi. 16) has: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God." Lk. (ix. 20) has: "The Christ of God." St. Mark omits altogether our Lord's famous answer to St. Peter concerning his primacy, which is so fully given by St. Matthew (xvi. 17-19). The Greek in Mk., in contrast with that in both Mt. and Lk., brings out the fact that St. Peter's answer was most prompt and spontaneous.

30. Should not tell any man of him—*i.e.*, as Mt. explains (xvi. 20), "that he was Jesus the Christ."

31. He began to teach them. St. Matthew (xvi. 21) is still more definite: "From that time Jesus *began to show* to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things." The Passion has up till now been the secret of our Lord's Sacred Heart, but now it must be disclosed, yet at first with little or no detail. This verse, however, gives us a remarkably complete outline of it, in its three stages: (a) the official rejection of our Lord, (b) his violent death, (c) his victory over death. (Cp. Lk. ix. 22.) It has been well remarked that St. Mark's words distinctly "contemplate Jerusalem as the scene of the rejection, for only there could the three classes of people here named take common action."—**Must suffer.** (Cp. Lk. xxiv. 26; Acts xxvi. 23. So it had been foretold by the Prophets. (Cp. Acts. viii. 32-35.)—**Many things.** This is a vague phrase in a way, yet one that conveys so much, and is often used of the Sacred Passion. (Cp. Mt. xvi. 21; Mk. ix. 11; Lk. xvii. 25; 1 Pet. ii. 21.) "I beheld, therefore, in the vision of the night, and lo, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven. And he came even to the Ancient of days: and they presented him before him. And he gave him power and glory, and a kingdom: and all peoples, tribes, and tongues shall serve him: his power is an everlasting power that shall not be destroyed" (Dan. vii. 13). Such is the triumph and glory of our Lord; but to reach it he must "pass
6

- 32 And he spoke the word openly. And Peter taking him, began to rebuke him.
- 33 Who turning about and seeing his disciples, threatened Peter, saying: Go behind me, Satan, because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but that are of men.

through many tribulations," and "suffer many things."—**Be rejected.** Cp. 1 Pet. ii. 4, 7, 8. The Greek word implies a rejection *after* examination. It would not be a hasty step, but the result of deliberately blinding their eyes to facts and proofs. "We have *seen* him, and there was no sightliness, that we should be desirous of him. Despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity" (Is. liii. 2, 3).—**The ancients**—"the elders," members of the Sanhedrim, who probably concerned themselves mainly with matters of civil administration. On the Sanhedrim, see Appendix, 5.—**And be killed.** This is the climax. (Cp. Acts iii. 15.) Imagine the effect on the minds of the Twelve as our Lord solemnly laid bare, one by one, these facts concerning himself.

32. **Openly**—"without reserve," "in plain language," "quite openly." There had been, almost from the beginning, many a hidden indication that our Lord would die a death of pain and violence (cp. Jn. i. 29; Jn. ii. 19; Jn. iii. 14-16; Mt. ix. 15); the poverty of our Lord, the death of his precursor, the sign of Jonas the Prophet which he had made his own, also pointed to this conclusion: but now there could be no doubt about it. This half-verse is peculiar to Mk.—**Taking him**—"taking him to himself," under his wing, as it were. The Greek word is used of the stronger coming to help the weaker, and as here applied to St. Peter and our Lord is most expressive. (Cp. Acts xviii. 26; Rom. xv. 7).—**Began to rebuke him.** "This is to happen at Jerusalem," thought St. Peter. But Jerusalem is many miles from Caesarea Philippi. Why go there at all? And so he said to our Lord: "Lord, be it far from thee, this shall not be unto thee" (Mt. xvi. 22). He did not yet understand the place of the Sacred Passion in the economy of man's redemption. (Read Heb. ii. 10-18.)

33. **Turning about**—"turning sharply"—a characteristic act. (Cp. Mt. ix. 22; Lk. ix. 44; xxii. 61; xxiii. 28).—**Seeing his disciples**—"looking on his disciples"—a touch of St. Mark.—**Threatened Peter**—peculiar to Mk., who thus accentuates the reproof, after omitting the commendation. The Greek word is the same as the one translated "rebuked" in verse 32.—**Go behind me.** Some have given a mild interpretation to these words, as though our Lord said to St. Peter: "Follow after me: let me lead thee more truly, and be thou my disciple indeed;" but the Greek word can hardly bear this sense, for it is used intransitively throughout the N.T. of departure and separation.

And calling together the multitude with his disciples, **34**
 he said to them: If any man will follow me, let him
 deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and who- **35**
 soever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel shall
 save it.

For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole **36**
 world, and suffer the loss of his soul?

Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? **37**

Our Lord used exactly the same words to Satan at the end of his triple temptation. (Cp. Mt. iv. 10.)—**Satan.** Mt. adds: "thou art a scandal to me." (Cp. 1 Cor. i., 22-27.)—**Thou savourest not**—"thy thoughts are not centred upon." (Cp. Rom. viii. 5; Phil. iii. 19; Col. iii. 2.) "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," says St. Paul (Phil. ii. 5), so that "we glory in the cross of Christ, by which the world is crucified to us, and we to the world" (Gal. vi. 14), "knowing no one but Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. ii. 2).—**But that are of men.** Cp. Is. lv. 8, 9; Zach. xiii. 7.

34. And calling together the multitude. Only Mk. draws attention to the unexpected presence of a crowd. Even in the remote villages around Caesarea, our Lord was recognized and followed by many, for "he could not be hid." Mt. has: "he said to his disciples"; Lk. has: "he said to all."—**If any man will follow me.** This great passage to the end of the chapter is recorded in almost identically the same words by all three Synop-
 tists. Such a saying uttered on such an occasion would naturally impress itself verbally on the Twelve, and gain currency in an identical form. The disciples might, so to say, forget the things our Lord had said of himself and his sufferings, but would remember and often rehearse to one another what he had said to them about themselves.—**Take up his cross.** Lk. (ix. 23) adds: "daily." (Cp. Gal. ii. 19, 20; 1 Pet. iv. 1.)

35. Whosoever will save his life. Our Lord is reported to have used these words on four distinct occasions: (a) here, which corresponds with Mt. xvi. 25, and Lk. ix. 24; (b) Mt. x. 39; (c) Lk. xvii. 33; (d) Jn. xii. 25.—**And for the Gospel**—peculiar to Mk. (Cp. 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.)

36. Suffer the loss—"forfeit." (Cp. 1 Cor. i. 18; 1 Pet. i. 9.) "He that keepeth the commandment, keepeth his own soul: but he that neglecteth his own way, shall die" (Prov. xix. 16).

37. In exchange for—"as a ransom for." "A man condemned to death by an earthly judge may sometimes save his life by paying a ransom. Our Lord, when he comes, will accept no such ransom." "What will you do in the day of visitation, and of the calamity which cometh from afar? to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?" (Is. x. 3). Cp. 2 Cor. v. 10; Rom. xiv. 10, 11.

- 38 For he that shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also will be ashamed of him, when he shall come in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.
- 39 And he said to them: Amen, I say to you, that there are some of them that stand here, who shall not taste death, till they see the kingdom of God in power.

38. He that shall be ashamed of me. Cp. Rom. i. 16; Gal. vi. 14; 2 Tim. i. 12; 1 Pet. iv. 16. "The word of the cross, to them indeed that perish, is foolishness; but to them that are saved, that is, to us, it is the power of God" (1 Cor. i. 18). "There is a shame that bringeth sin" (Ecclus. iv. 25), and our duty is "with the heart to believe unto justice, and with the mouth to make confession unto salvation" (Rom. x. 10), for "if we deny him, he will also deny us" (2 Tim. ii. 12).—In this adulterous and sinful generation—peculiar to Mk. (Cp. Lk. ix. 26, 27.)—The Son of man will be ashamed of him. Cp. Mt. x. 32, 33. For the converse, cp. Lk. xii. 8; Apoc. iii. 8, 10, 11.—In the glory of his Father. Lk. has more fully: "in his glory and that of his Father." This is the first reference to the glory of our Lord's second coming. For the phrase, cp. Jn. xvii. 5, 22, 24; and for the angelic glory then to be manifested, cp. Mt. xxiv. 31; xxv. 31; 2 Thess. i. 7.

39. And he said to them. These words seem to have been spoken privately to the Twelve, after the multitude had left. Some make them the first verse of chapter ix. Of those then standing with our Lord, three beheld him transfigured in glory six days later: all, save one, were witnesses of his resurrection; and one at least, St. John, survived the capture of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. On each of these occasions "the Kingdom of God" came "with power," but it is not easy to ascertain the exact meaning of the verse. The phrase "the Kingdom of God" is, however, so exclusively applied to the Church of God in the world, that we may well suppose our Lord is here alluding chiefly to the Day of Pentecost. The Holy Ghost was then poured forth, and the Kingdom of God did indeed come "with power." All nations were moved in a single instant, and there were "added in that one day three thousand souls." (Cp. Rom. xv. 18, 19; Col. i. 6.) This seems perhaps the most natural and satisfactory interpretation of the passage, and the words of our Lord so taken fit in very beautifully as a message of comfort and consolation after the previous prediction of the Passion and the preaching of the Cross, which had considerably disquieted the minds of the Twelve.—In power—peculiar to Mk.

CHAPTER IX

THE TRANSFIGURATION—THE HEALING OF THE LUNATIC
BOY—SECOND PREDICTION OF THE PASSION—
TEACHING ON HUMILITY AND SCANDAL

AND after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter and James and John, and leadeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves, and was transfigured before them.

1. After six days. Lk. has "about eight days after," but his reckoning may be considered an inclusive one. Mt. agrees with Mk.—Jesus taketh—a vivid present; so, too, "leadeth." The Greek verb implies deliberate choice on the part of our Lord, and he chose the same three who had witnessed the daughter of Jairus being raised from the dead (v. 37), and who should witness his Agony in the Garden (xiv. 33). The Transfiguration is also recorded by Mt. (xvii. 1) and Lk. (ix. 28), and is alluded to in Jn. i. 14, and 2 Pet. i. 16. Lk. alone tells us that the immediate purpose of our Lord's retirement was to pray, while Mk., by the double phrase "apart, by themselves," emphasizes the complete privacy of the event.—Into a high mountain. Was this Mount Thabor, a few miles to the south-east of Nazareth, or Mount Hermon, close to Caesarea Philippi? Probably the latter. Thabor is a mere rounded knoll, little more than a thousand feet above the plain, and was crowned by a fortress, while Hermon, the most beautiful and conspicuous mountain in Palestine or Syria, rises to a height of 9,200 feet, overlooking the whole of Caesarea, and offered a perfect solitude. Thabor, moreover, is situated in the southern portion of Galilee, many miles from where our Lord now was. (Cp. 2 Pet. i. 17, 18.) We must remember that the Transfiguration took place by night—By themselves—peculiar to Mk.—Was transfigured. So, too, Mt. Lk., writing for Gentile readers, has: "whilst he prayed, the shape of his countenance was altered." For a parallel, cp. 2 Cor. iii. 7-15. Even as the soul of our Lord could be affected by sorrow and weariness, as at the Agony in the Garden, so, too, could it be filled with consolation and the enjoyment of heavenly things, quite apart from the continual happiness of the Beatific Vision which it enjoyed. Such an influx of joy our Lord experienced at the Transfiguration, though its main purpose was doubtless the instruction and fortifying of his Apostles. They were not to be ashamed of his Cross and Passion; they were to "preach Christ and him crucified"; they were to crucify themselves, daily to bear their cross, and to suffer many things for their Lord and Master. Let them, then, be strengthened in

- 2 And his garments became shining and exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller upon earth can make white.
- 3 And there appeared to them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.
- 4 And Peter answering, said to Jesus: Rabbi, it is good for us to be here, and let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

faith by the vision of their Lord in glory, by the testimony of Moses and Elias, above all by the renewed testimony of the Eternal Father to his only-begotten Son. The scandal of the Cross shall thus be balanced by the glory of the Transfiguration. Hence our Lord decreed that it should take place but a few days after the first disclosure of the Sacred Passion.

2. **Shining.** The Greek word occurs only here in N.T., and is used of the flashing of burnished brass or gold.—**Exceeding white.** Mt. and Lk. have merely "white." (Cp. Apoc. i. 13-18.)—**So as no fuller on earth can make white**—peculiar to Mk., who would receive the words direct from St. Peter, for only an eye-witness would be likely to make such a comparison. Mk. makes no direct reference to the glory of our Lord's face, as Mt. does. St. Mark "borrows one image from the world of nature, another from that of man's art, and by these he endeavours to reproduce for his readers the transcendent brightness of that light which now arrayed the Person of our Lord from head to foot, breaking forth from within, and overflowing the very garments which he wore."

3. **There appeared to them.** The three Apostles, according to Lk., were "heavy with sleep," as the Transfiguration began, but the brightness of the light around our Lord awakened them, and they saw his glory and the two that stood with him.—**Elias with Moses.** Both Mt. and Lk. give the names in the reverse order. Moses represented the Law, Elias the Prophets, and thus their presence bore testimony to the union of the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel.—**Talking with Jesus.** Lk. gives us the subject of their conversation—viz., "His decease that he should accomplish in Jerusalem."

4. **And Peter answering.** Lk. is careful to note that it was as Moses and Elias were taking their leave of our Lord that St. Peter began to speak, for such is the force of the word "answering." Too short a time had the conversation lasted, too short a glimpse of the Master's glory had been vouchsafed to one who loved our Lord as did St. Peter. He must make at least an attempt to prolong the event.—**Rabbi.** Mt. has "Lord"; Lk. has "Master"; Mk., as usual, retains where he can the Aramaic word. It was probably by the name "Rabbi" that the Apostles commonly spoke to our Lord. (Cp. Jn. vi. 25; xi. 8; Mk. xi. 21.)—**It is good for us to be here**—implying "therefore let us stay where we are." The emphasis is on "here." St. Peter's

For he knew not what he said: for they were struck 5 with fear.

And there was a cloud overshadowing them: and a 6 voice came out of the cloud, saying: This is my most beloved son; hear ye him.

And immediately looking about, they saw no man any 7 more, but Jesus only with them.

thought seems to have been that even now the kingdom of our Lord might be established in its glory, and that Hermon would admirably suit as its headquarters. But "he knew not what he said." "For my thoughts are not your thoughts: nor your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are my ways exalted above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts" (Is. lv. 8, 9).—And let us make. Mt. has: "if thou wilt, let us make."—Three tabernacles—*i.e.*, three booths of wattled boughs, made of the brushwood, which clothes the spurs of Hermon.—One for thee. Our Lord comes first. And now Mk. gives the names in the reverse order to that adopted in verse 3.

5. He knew not what he said. Cp. xiv. 40.—For they were struck with fear—peculiar to Mk. Heavenly visions and visitations fill men with fear and reverence, which yet do not at all exclude delight and the full enjoyment of what is vouchsafed. (Cp. Lk. i. 29, 30; ii. 9, 10.)

6. There was a cloud—"there arose a cloud." It was "a bright cloud," as Mt. tells us. In 2 Mach. ii. 8 we read: "The majesty of the Lord shall appear, and there shall be a cloud as it was also shown to Moses, and when Solomon prayed that the place might be sanctified to the great God." Cp. Ps. xcvi. 2: "Clouds and darkness are round about him." Ps. ciii. 3: "Thou makest the clouds thy chariot, thou walkest upon the wings of the winds." A cloud was a recognized symbol of the Divine Presence, and in connection with our Lord we read of it at his Transfiguration, his Ascension (Acts i. 9), and his Second Coming (Mk. xiii. 26). Cp. 3 Kings viii. 10; Apoc. i. 7.—My most beloved Son—"this is my Son, my beloved one." Mt. adds: "in whom I am well pleased," as at our Lord's Baptism, (i. 11).—Hear ye him. The main difference between this voice and that which was heard at our Lord's Baptism, is the words "hear ye him," which are here added by all three Synop- tists. It was the first voice from heaven which the Apostles had heard. "Hear ye him" is equivalent to "obey him." (Cp. Jn. x. 8, 16; xviii. 37.) "Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye" (Jn. ii. 5), must be our rule, for "if we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater. For this is the testi- mony of God, which is greater, because he has testified of his Son" (1 Jn. v. 9).

7. And immediately—"and suddenly." The disciples had "fallen on their faces," and meanwhile our Lord had "touched

- 8 And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them not to tell any man what things they had seen, till the Son of man shall be risen again from the dead.
- 9 And they kept the word to themselves; questioning together what that should mean, when he shall be risen from the dead.
- 10 And they asked him, saying: Why then do the Pharisees and scribes say that Elias must come first?

and raised them from the ground " (Mt.). The Greek word for " suddenly " occurs only here in N.T.—**Looking about**—a touch of St. Mark.—**Jesus only.** The Law is completed, the Prophets are fulfilled: our Lord alone remains. We " know no one but Jesus Christ, and him crucified " (1 Cor. ii. 2).

8. **He charged them.** Cp. viii. 30.—**Not to tell.** Our Lord again gives his disciples a reminder of his Resurrection. They are to wait until the glory of the Transfiguration is confirmed by that of Easter Day. That event is to be the crowning proof of his Divinity, and till that " day which the Lord hath made " all other proofs are to be kept in reserve.

9. **And they kept the word to themselves.** The " word " in question was not the Transfiguration, but our Lord's suggestion as to his future Resurrection. Clearly the disciples had not understood his announcement of this fact in viii. 31. The Greek verb translated " kept " is a very strong one: the disciples were in possession, as it were, of a great secret, the full import of which they did not fully understand: and while they discussed it freely among themselves, in private, they jealously guarded it from all outside, and they did so in obedience to their Master's solemn injunctions.—**Questioning together what that should mean**—a detail peculiar to St. Mark.

10. **They asked him**—" they repeatedly (or ' urgently ') asked him."—**The Pharisees and Scribes.** Some MSS. here omit " the Pharisees "; Mt. mentions only the Scribes.—**Elias must come first.** It is important to understand the reasoning of the Apostles here. To their minds the Transfiguration seemed the end of all things, and they felt sure that our Lord was alluding in verse 8 to the *general* resurrection, which could not now be far off. But, according to the Prophet Malachias (iv. 5, 6): " Elias would be sent *before* this great and dreadful day of the Lord." Why, then, has Elias not already come, if the Resurrection and glorious second Advent of the Messiah be so near? Moreover, if Elias is to come before the Resurrection, how can it be that our Lord will be rejected and slain by the rulers of the people, since, according to the same prophecy of Malachias, Elias will " turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers " ?

Who answering, said to them: Elias, when he shall **11** come first, shall restore all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things and be despised?

But I say to you, that Elias also is come (and they have **12** done to him whatsoever they would), as it is written of him.

11. Shall restore all things. Cp. Acts iii. 21.—And how it is written—"but how is it written"—*i.e.*, is it not *also* written that the Son of man must suffer many things? Our Lord, in order to help the solution of the difficulty, here proposes a second difficulty: "How can my Passion follow the Restoration by Elias?" *Both* prophecies, says our Lord, are true, and *both* must be fulfilled: "Elias will certainly come, and I, too, shall certainly suffer."—And be despised. Cp. Ps. xxi. 7-9: "I am a worm, and no man: the reproach of men and the outcast of the people. All they that saw me have laughed me to scorn: they have spoken with the lips and wagged the head. He hoped in the Lord, let him deliver him: let him save him, seeing he delighteth in him." Cp. Is. liii. 2: "There is no beauty in him, nor comeliness: and we have seen him, and there was no sightliness, that we should be desirous of him. Despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity; and his look was as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed him not." Notice that our Lord, in speaking of his Passion, again uses here the word "must," as in viii. 31. "Necessity lay upon him" to tread that wine-press. The Greek word for "despised" is very strong, and is found only here in N.T. It means "to be set at naught," "to be reputed vile." (Cp. Job xviii. 3.)

12. Elias also is come. Our Lord here refers, as the disciples understood (cp. Mt. xi. 14), to St. John the Baptist, who came to preach to the world "in the spirit and power of Elias" (Lk. i. 17).—And they have done to him—*i.e.*, to St. John.—As it is written of him—peculiar to Mk. The "him" refers to Elias. In this case Scripture had foretold the future not by prophecy, but by a type. The fate intended for Elias had overtaken St. John, who "had found his Jezebel in Herodias." (Cp. 3 Kings xix. 2.) So the incident of the Transfiguration came to a close. It has well been called "the summit-level" of our Lord's life on earth. "From this time forward there is a perceptible change. Miracles, which up till now had been so frequent, well-nigh cease: indeed, only five mark the period between the Transfiguration and the Passion. As regards our Lord's teaching, his addresses in public now become few and rare, while special revelations of the future to the Twelve become more frequent, and uniformly centre around his Passion and Crucifixion."

- 13** And coming to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes disputing with them.
- 14** And presently all the people seeing Jesus, were astonished and struck with fear: and running to him, saluted him.
- 15** And he asked them: What do you question about among you?

13. And coming to his disciples—*i.e.*, "on the day following," as Lk. tells us. This miracle is also recorded by Mt. (xvii. 14) and by Lk. (ix. 38), but most fully by far by Mk.—The Scribes disputing. These were probably Rabbis attached to the local synagogues, but quite ready, as the rest of their class, to seize any opportunity of discrediting the disciples of our Lord. The absence of the Master and the incapacity of the nine furnished exactly what they sought. These disciples had received from our Lord the power to cast out evil spirits, and had exercised it with success more than once (cp. vi. 13 and Lk. x. 17); but here is a sad case in which, through want of faith, they had signally failed. No doubt the Scribes were getting the best of the argument, when our Lord appeared on the scene, while the people would be greatly disappointed in the nine disciples, and were probably twitting them with their incapacity to do now what they had once done. This is quite the force of the Greek verb translated "disputing."

14. The whole of this verse and verse 15 are peculiar to St. Mark.—Presently—"immediately."—Seeing Jesus. Did our Lord still bear some traces of the glory of the Transfiguration? When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with "the two tables of the testimony," his face was "horned from the conversation of the Lord, and Aaron and the children of Israel, seeing the face of Moses horned, were afraid to come near" (Exod. xxxiv. 30). Something of the same kind may have happened in the case of our Lord here, though the effect of it on the multitude was the reverse to what had taken place in the case of Moses. But it does not appear likely that this was really the case, and it is difficult to see how it could be so, when we remember our Lord's strong words about keeping silence concerning his Transfiguration.—Were astonished and struck with fear. In the Greek there is only one verb, but it is one that points to an extremity of terror. It is used only three times in N.T., and by no one but by St. Mark, in xiv. 33, xvi. 6, and here.—Running to him, they saluted him—a picture quite in St. Mark's style. "Saluted" = "welcomed warmly," but only by the people, not by the Scribes.

15. And he asked them. The question would produce instant silence and calm among the agitated crowd. The question is addressed in a general way, not only to the disciples, but to the multitude as well.

And one of the multitude, answering, said: Master, 16
I have brought my son to thee, having a dumb spirit,

Who, wheresoever he taketh him, dasheth him, and 17
he foameth, and gnasheth with the teeth, and pineth
away: and I spoke to thy disciples to cast him out, and
they could not.

Who answering them, said: O incredulous genera- 18
tion, how long shall I be with you? How long shall
I suffer y^e u? Bring him unto me.

And they brought him. And when he had seen him, 19
immediately the spirit troubled him; and being thrown
down upon the ground, he rolled about foaming.

16. One of the multitude. Mt. represents him as "falling down on his knees" before our Lord. Our Lord had asked his question of the crowd: it was fitting that one of the crowd should reply; and since the suffering boy had been the subject of dispute, who more fitting than the father of the boy could be found to make the reply?—Master—"Teacher." So, too, in Lk. Mt. has "Lord."—I have brought—"have carried"—a tender detail, peculiar to Mk. The father had carried his afflicted child in his own arms. His words beautifully express his thought on leaving his house. "I will carry my boy to the great Prophet of Galilee: he will help me."—To thee. The word "thee" is emphatic. The man had brought his boy that morning, under the impression that our Lord was there. On discovering that he was on the mountain, he had applied to the disciples. This feature of the story is not apparent in Mt. and Lk.—My son. Lk. adds: "my only one."—Having—i.e., because he has.

17. Wheresoever. The seizures might occur at any time, and in any place: and they occurred "frequently" (Mt.).—Dasheth—of a heavy fall to the ground.—Foameth—gnasheth. These words occur only here in N.T.—Pineth away—i.e., he appeared to shrivel, or to become rigid, and devoid of all sensation. Notice the fulness of sad details given in this verse. Mt. adds: "he falleth often into the fire, and often into the water."—I spoke to thy disciples. Lk. has more pathetically: "I begged thy disciples." How confused and ashamed those disciples must have looked! Did "the Lord turn and look upon them"?

18. O incredulous generation. Both Mt. and Lk. add: "perverse." The reply of our Lord is given in all three accounts in almost identical words.—Bring him unto me. Lk. has more tenderly: "Bring hither thy son." Note the wondrous calm and freedom from all haste in our Lord throughout this narrative.

19. And they brought him. From this we learn that the boy was not with his father in the crowd, but in safe keeping not far

- 20 And he asked his father: How long time is it since this hath happened unto him? But he said: From his infancy.
- 21 And oftentimes hath he cast him into the fire and into waters to destroy him. But if thou canst do any thing, help us, having compassion on us.
- 22 And Jesus saith to him: If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.
- 23 And immediately the father of the boy crying out, with tears said: I do believe, Lord: help my unbelief.
- 24 And when Jesus saw the multitude running together,

away. When he had seen him—*i.e.*, when the boy had seen our Lord. The evil spirit within him could not brook thus being brought into our Lord's presence.—He rolled about. The word occurs only here in N.T. The details are peculiar to Mk.

20. From here to verse 25 is all peculiar to Mk.—From his infancy—"from a mere child." The whole misery of the child's life is unveiled in this simple reply.

21. Into the fire and into waters. Mt. merely says that the boy often *fell* into fire and water, but Mk. traces the events to their real cause more strongly. The evil spirit *threw* the boy into fire and water, and this, as it seemed to the father, with a view to destroying him. But, as we may gather from the miracle in which the devils were permitted to enter the swine (Mt. viii. 31; Mk. v. 10; Lk. viii. 31), the evil spirit had no wish or intention to kill his victim, but would prefer to continue to dwell in him, and harass him in these dreadful ways.—If thou canst do anything. The word "anything" means "even a little to help me, and alleviate my poor boy's sad state," and is very emphatic. It is as though he said: "Your disciples could do *nothing*; but perchance you can do at least a little to help me, though the case is so grave and apparently incurable." His faith was not equal to that of the leper in i. 40, so our Lord sought to strengthen it.

22. And Jesus saith to him. Notice how exactly the words of the father are taken up and answered by our Lord. "If thou canst believe" corresponds exactly with "if thou canst do anything." Our Lord seemed to delay a little, and the boy had a fit there and then; all this, together with the failure of the Apostles, may have somewhat shaken the father's faith.—If thou canst believe. Cp. xi. 23, 24.

23. Crying out. The Greek word is the same as that used of the cry of the unclean spirit in i. 23, and denotes a loud cry of agony, as of one in great pain.—Help my unbelief—as though he were conscious that his faith had been weak.

24. Saw the multitude running together. The cry of the father of the lunatic boy apparently attracted them once more

he threatened the unclean spirit, saying to him: Deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee, go out of him; and enter not any more into him.

And crying out, and greatly tearing him, he went out **25** of him, and he became as dead, so that many said: He is dead.

But Jesus, taking him by the hand, lifted him up; **26** and he arose.

And when he was come into the house, his disciples **27** secretly asked him: Why could not we cast him out?

And he said to them: This kind can go out by nothing, **28** but by prayer and fasting.

And departing from thence, they passed through **29** Galilee, and he would not that any man should know it.

to where our Lord stood. The Greek word for "running together" is used only here in N.T., and indicates a growth of excitement and interest in the event on the part of the bystanders.

—He threatened—"he rebuked." Mk. alone records our Lord's words of rebuke.—I command thee—with emphasis on "I."—Enter not any more into him—*i.e.*, as you would wish to do. Cp. Lk. xi. 24-26 for the spiritual analogy to this.

25. Greatly tearing—"frequently tearing"—a last and desperate attack of the unclean spirit.—So that many said—"so that the many said"—*i.e.*, they *all* said it, for there was no doubt about it. What a picture is here given! The crowd gathering around the apparently dead child, as the murmur passed from mouth to mouth: "He is dead"; the anguish on the face of the father; and our Lord at hand, going to the child, and raising him from the ground, well and sound.

26. And he arose. Lk. completes the picture: "and Jesus restored him to his father." (Cp. Lk. vii. 15.)

27. Into the house—a touch of St. Mark.—Why could not we cast him out? How vividly did the remembrance of the great powers bestowed upon them now come back to their minds!

28. By prayer and fasting. Some MSS. omit the words: "and fasting." In Mt.'s account of the interview (xvii. 18) our Lord first accounts for the failure of the disciples by their want of faith, and adds the words about having faith as a grain of mustard seed, and thereby removing mountains, which are found also in other contexts (Lk. xvii. 6; Mt. xxi. 21).

29. They passed through Galilee—*i.e.*, from the place of the Transfiguration in the direction of Capharnaum. Our Lord at this time seems to have been much occupied in instructing his disciples fully concerning his Passion. St. Matthew (xvii. 21), indeed, uses the phrase: "while they *abode* together in Galilee," implying quite a season of retirement for prayer and instruction.

- 30 And he taught his disciples, and said to them: The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise again the third day.
- 31 But they understood not the word, and they were afraid to ask him.
- 32 And they come to Capharnaum. And when they were in the house, he asked them: What did you treat of in the way ?

The precaution recorded in the words, "he would not that any man should know it," is peculiar to Mk. The Greek verb translated "they passed" implies that the journey was very privately made, avoiding all populous centres, and not staying long in any one place.

30. He taught . . . and said. Both verbs are in the imperfect: "he kept on teaching, and frequently said."—**Shall be betrayed**—"is being betrayed." The present tense is most vivid, and tells its own tale. After the feeding of the five thousand, as St. John tells us (vi. 71), our Lord had said to the Twelve: "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? Now he meant Judas Iscariot, for this same was about to betray him, whereas he was one of the Twelve." And this was a whole year before the end! Several weeks have now gone by, and our Lord more clearly discloses this awful feature of his Passion. Indeed, this is the only additional detail which this second prediction of the Passion contains. The rest had already been declared (viii. 31).—**Into the hands of men.** This phrase is not so detailed as the one used by our Lord at the first prediction of the Passion: "by the ancients, and by the high-priests, and the Scribes" (viii. 31), but at the same time it is far wider, and prepares the way for his deliverance "to the Gentiles," upon which he specially dwelt in the third prediction (x. 33).

31. What a picture is contained in this verse! How true it is to human nature, and what an insight does it give into the loving relation between our Lord and his disciples. Lk. tells us much the same, though more fully (ix. 45), while Mt. adds: "they were troubled exceedingly" (xvii. 22). Cp. Lk. xxiv. 25-27.

32. **To Capharnaum.** Our Lord's ministry in Galilee ended, as it had begun, at Capharnaum. He now pays the didrachma with the stater found in the fish's mouth (Mt. xvii. 23), and then journeyed southwards, and visited Capharnaum no more, though after his Resurrection he is found near there by the shore of the Lake (Jn. xxi. 1), and among the hills (Mt. xxviii. 16).—**In the house**—probably that of St. Peter. (Cp. i. 29.)—**What did you treat of in the way?** This straight and somewhat disquieting question of our Lord, revealing again, as it does, the tender intimacy between him and his disciples, is recorded only by St. Mark.

But they held their peace, for in the way they had 33
disputed among themselves, which of them should be
the greatest.

And sitting down, he called the twelve, and saith to 34
them: If any man desire to be first, he shall be the last
of all, and the minister of all.

And taking a child, he set him in the midst of them. 35
Whom when he had embraced, he saith to them:

Whosoever shall receive one such child as this in my 36
name, receiveth me. And whosoever shall receive me,
receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

John answered him, saying: Master, we saw one 37
casting out devils in thy name, who followeth not us,
and we forbade him.

33. This pictorial verse is also peculiar to Mk. The subject of discussion was very likely suggested by the selection of the privileged three to witness the Transfiguration, and by the prominence of St. Peter on that occasion. Perchance also our Lord, while speaking fully of his Passion, had said much concerning his kingdom.

34. *Sitting down*—a touch of St. Mark. Our Lord assumes the attitude of a Teacher. (Cp. Mt. v. 1; xiii. 1, 2; Lk. v. 3; Jn. viii. 2.)—*He called the twelve*—a touch of St. Mark. Our Lord would have them *all* learn this lesson. (Cp. x. 43.) The same dispute arose among the Twelve even at the Last Supper, and our Lord then repeated the self-same lesson. (Cp. Lk. xxii. 24-27; Mt. xxiii. 8; Mk. x. 42-45.)

35. *Taking a child*. There is a tradition that this child was St. Ignatius of Antioch. For "a child" read "a little child"—one of St. Mark's diminutives.—*In the midst of them*—more strong and pictorial than Lk.'s "by him" (ix. 47).—*When he had embraced him*—a touch of St. Mark.

36. The words of our Lord are reported more fully by Mt. (xviii. 3, 4), where they are made the basis for the warning about scandalizing one of his little ones. (Cp. 1 Cor. xiv. 20.)—*Receiveth me*. Cp. Mt. xxv. 40.—*But him that sent me*. Cp. Mt. x. 40; Lk. x. 16; Jn. xii. 44, 45.

37. *John answered him*. These are the only words attributed by the Synoptists specifically to St. John. They are in some measure a response to the teaching just received. The phrase "in my name" had reminded St. John of a recent occurrence, and he takes the first opportunity of candidly laying the facts before his Master. During the recent journey through Northern Galilee, he, together with others probably, had prevented a non-disciple from using our Lord's Name for the purpose of exorcizing those possessed with evil spirits. And now the

- 38 But Jesus said: Do not forbid him. For there is no man that doth a miracle in my name, and can soon speak ill of me.
- 39 For he that is not against you, is for you.
- 40 For whosoever shall give you to drink a cup of water in my name, because you belong to Christ: amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.
- 41 And whosoever shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me: it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

thought comes to him: "Did I do right? Perhaps I ought to have allowed him so to act. It was not through jealousy or ambition that I sought to prevent him, but from love for my Master. I will tell him all, and hear what he says." The incident is also recorded by Lk. (ix. 49), though less fully.—We forbade him—"we endeavoured to forbid him."

38. Do not forbid him. For an exact parallel to this incident, cp. Num. xi. 29. Cp. also Phil. i. 18.—For there is no man. These words are recorded only by Mk. Our Lord saw great possibilities in such a one, and these were to be valued.

39. These words are also in Lk. (ix. 50). Cp. Mt. xii. 30; Lk. xi. 23.

40. St. Matthew (xviii. 1-35) gives another and a fuller account of this discourse of our Lord. The phrase "because you belong to Christ" is unique in the Gospels, and reminds us of St. Paul's words: "they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh" (Gal. v. 24). Cp. Rom. viii. 9; 1 Cor. iii. 23.—A cup of water. Mt. (x. 42) has: "a cup of cold water."—He shall not lose his reward. Cp. Mt. xxv. 34-40; 1 Cor. iii. 8; Apoc. xxii. 12.

41. Scandalize Lit. "to put a stumbling-block in another's way," and so lead him into sin. "Take away the stumbling-blocks out of the way of my people" (Is. lvii. 14). Cp. Rom. xiv. 13; 1 Cor. viii. 12.—These little ones. The qualifying phrase "that believe in me" shows the sense in which these words are to be understood. We are all to be "little in our own eyes" (2 Kings vi. 22), for "the Lord is the keeper of little ones" (Ps. cxiv.). In a general way the words describe all the followers of our Lord, but there is a special reference to the spirit of humility, to those "who become as little children," and are "poor in spirit." (Cp. Lk. x. 21.) Some have seen in the phrase a contrast between those who are "weak" in faith and those who are "strong." "Now we that are stronger," says St. Paul, "ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Rom. xv. 1). Cp. 1 Cor. ix. 22.—It were better for him—"it is better for him"—a vivid present. (Cp. Rom. xiv. 13; 1 Cor. viii. 12, 13.—Millstone. In Latin, *mola*

And if thy hand scandalize thee, cut it off: it is **42**
better for thee to enter into life, maimed, than having
two hands to go into hell, into unquenchable fire:

Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not ex- **43**
tinguished.

And if thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off. It is **44**
better for thee to enter lame into life everlasting, than
having two feet, to be cast into the hell of unquenchable
fire:

Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not ex- **45**
tinguished.

And if thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out. It is **46**
better for thee with one eye to enter into the kingdom
of God, than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of
fire:

asinaria, an ass's millstone—*i.e.*, a millstone so heavy that it took an ass to turn it, in contradistinction to a hand-millstone.

42. Into life—*i.e.*, into life eternal. (Cp. Jn. v. 24; 1 Jn. v. 11, 12.)—**Into hell.** Lit. "into Gehenna." To the south of Jerusalem there was a valley called the Ravine of Hinnom, or Topheth, a mile and a half in length. It is a deep, retired glen, shut in by rugged cliffs, with the bleak mountain sides rising over all. In the reign of Achaz (4 Kings xvi.) we read of how "he consecrated his son, making him pass through the fire according to the idols of the nations, and burnt incense in the valley of Hinnom." "The children of Juda," says Jeremias (vii. 31), "have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire." But King Josias, who "walked after the Lord," "defiled Topheth, so that no man should consecrate there his son or his daughter through fire to Moloch" (4 Kings xxiii. 10). From that time it became the common cesspool of Jerusalem, and the Jews ever regarded it with horror, by reason of the hideous rites which had disfigured it. In the N.T. the name is used exclusively in a figurative sense, and designates the abode of lost souls, "the smoke of whose torments shall ascend up for ever and ever; neither have they rest day or night, who have adored the beast" (Apoc. xiv. 11). Cp. Isaias (xxx. 33): "Topheth is prepared from yesterday, prepared by the king deep and wide. The nourishments thereof is fire and much wood, the breath of the Lord as a torrent of brimstone kindling it."

43. Where their worm. The words are a quotation from Is. lxvi. 24. In the best MSS. they occur only once, as a climax, in verse 47.

46. Thy eye. "All that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of

- 47 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished.
- 48 For every one shall be salted with fire: and every victim shall be salted with salt.

life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 Jn. ii. 16). Cp. 2 Pet. ii. 12-14. The importance attached by our Lord to this point of his teaching may be gathered from the triple illustration of it which he deigns to give.

48. For every one shall be salted with fire. The words of this verse and the next are peculiar to St. Mark, and have greatly perplexed commentators. Many are the suggestions made as to their real meaning, but it may candidly be admitted that no wholly satisfactory explanation has as yet been reached. It is well to bear in mind that St. Mark's report of our Lord's words is very condensed; and as the passage is full of figures of speech, this condensation adds considerably to the difficulty of fixing their exact force and bearing. What would be abundantly clear to our Lord's hearers, is for us wrapt in some uncertainty. Let it be granted that our Lord is here quoting or alluding to a passage in the Book of Leviticus (Lev. ii. 13), which would be very familiar to most of those who were listening to him. "*Whatsoever sacrifice thou offerest, thou shalt season it with salt, neither shalt thou take away the salt of the covenant of thy God from thy sacrifice. In all thy oblations, thou shalt offer salt.*" (Cp. Ezech. xliii. 24.) Now these words are very strong and definite, and they associate most closely the idea of sacrifice with salt. A sacrifice to God *must* be seasoned with salt, otherwise it will not be acceptable to him. Moreover, salt was a recognized symbol of incorruption and perpetuity, so that, for example, they who would make a bond of friendship were accustomed to cement and strengthen such a bond by the eating of salt together. "Do you not know that the Lord God of Israel gave to David the kingdom over Israel for ever to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt?" (2 Paralip. xiii. 5). Now our Lord has been speaking much of self-sacrifice, of renouncing self in various ways, and of the necessity of so doing in order to avoid a certain dreadful fire that never is extinguished. So the two figures of salt and fire come before us, and are intermingled.

Next it should be noted that there is no opposition or contrast between the two parts of verse 48: indeed, they are connected by the word "and," and the first part is explained by the second. As every victim is salted with salt (says our Lord, alluding to the well-known words and figure in Leviticus, which forms the key to the whole passage), so, too, everyone who desires to make an offering of himself well-pleasing to God, and would make a compact of love and friendship with him, must be "salted with fire." With what fire? we may ask. He must be cleansed and

Salt is good. But if the salt become unsavoury, 49
wherewith will you season it? Have salt in you, and
have peace among you.

penetrated with that fire by which evil affections and concupiscences are consumed and purged away, in order that he may escape from that other fire which is not extinguished and of which so much has just been said. You may call that cleansing "fire" by many names: you may call it a plucking out of the eyes, or a cutting off of hand or foot: it may take various shapes according to the individual need or occasion; but the fact remains that each one becomes an oblation acceptable to God, a true and lasting friend of God, precisely in proportion as he is salted (*i.e.*, cleansed and consecrated), by whatever special fire cleanses him from sin, and from the love and occasions of sin. The endurance of trials, the practice of self-denial, the daily bearing one's cross, the fighting the good fight, are all typified by this fire, and merely other names for it. It is as though our Lord had said: "Every victim must be salted with salt, for thus it is consecrated to God: you know well what those words mean: but lo! I now tell you yet more: every victim shall be salted with fire, for everyone must consecrate himself to God by burning away all that is amiss: thus only can he 'purge out the old leaven, and become a new paste,' for it is my desire 'to make all things new.'" It may be noted that there is an exact parallel to this step from "salt" to "fire" in the step from "water" to the "Holy Ghost and fire" in the words of St. John the Baptist about our Lord. "I indeed baptize you with water unto penance, but he who is to come after me, is stronger than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to carry: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Mt. iii. 11). Thus is established the reason for the severity with oneself of which our Lord has spoken so emphatically in verses 42-47, and thus we see the force of the word "for" at the beginning of verse 48. That word has no reference to verse 47, but to the whole previous context. (Cp. 1 Cor. iii. 13.)

49. **If the salt become unsavoury.** Cp. Mt. v. 13; Lk. xiv. 34, 35.—**Have salt in you.** For what this implies, cp. Rom. xii. 1, 2.—**Have peace among you.** Cp. Rom. xii. 18; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; 1 Pet. iii. 10, 11.

CHAPTER X

MARRIAGE IS NOT TO BE DISSOLVED—THE RICH YOUNG MAN—THIRD PREDICTION OF THE PASSION—THE PETITION OF THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE—BARTIMAEUS CURED OF BLINDNESS

- 1 AND rising up from thence, he cometh into the territories of Judea beyond the Jordan: and the multitudes flock to him again. And as he was accustomed, he taught them again.
- 2 And the Pharisees coming to him asked him: Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him.

1. **Rising up**—a strong, definite word, marking our Lord's final farewell to Galilee. This took place about six months before the Passion. "His face was steadfastly set to go to Jerusalem" (Lk. ix. 51). Cp. Mt. xix. 1. The time was spent partly in Judaea, partly in Peraea, beyond the Jordan, and included a visit to Jerusalem in September for the Feast of Tabernacles (Jn. vii. 14), and another in December for the Feast of the Dedication (Jn. x. 22), a retreat to Bethany (Jn. x. 40), a second retreat to Ephrem "near the wilderness" (Jn. xi. 54), ending in the last journey to Jerusalem through Jericho. It is this period which St. Luke has described in the great section of his Gospel (ix. 51 to xix. 22), while St. John (vii. 10 to ix. 56) informs us of the doings of our Lord in Jerusalem itself during those months. Our Lord has now bidden farewell to Galilee for good. It is the beginning of the end.—**Beyond the Jordan**—*i.e.*, in Peraea. We should supply the word "and" before "beyond," on the authority of the best MSS., for no part of Judaea lay beyond the Jordan.—**Flock to him again**—St. Mark's favourite word. (Cp. i. 45; iii. 7, 8; vi. 33.)—**As he was accustomed**—*i.e.*, chiefly by parables. St. Luke here gives us the parables of the Prodigal Son, the Great Supper, the Unjust Steward, the Rich Man and Lazarus, the Lost Sheep, and the Lost Groat.—**He taught them**—"he went on teaching them," whenever an opportunity presented itself. Notice the use of the word "again" twice in one verse. Our Lord is continuing in Judaea his work on the lines he had adopted in Galilee.

2. **Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?** Mt. adds (xix. 3), "for every cause," putting the case to our Lord rather from the Jewish point of view, for on this question the rival schools of Hillel and Shammai were divided, the former adopting

But he answering, saith to them: What did Moses **3** command you?

Who said: Moses permitted to write a bill of divorce, **4** and to put her away.

To whom Jesus answering said: Because of the hard- **5** ness of your heart he wrote you that precept.

But from the beginning of the creation, God made **6** them male and female.

For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother: **7** and shall cleave to his wife.

And they two shall be in one flesh. Therefore now **8** they are not two, but one flesh.

What therefore God hath joined together, let not man **9** put asunder.

the more lax, the latter the stricter view. St. Mark, writing for Romans and Gentiles, puts the matter more simply, but in such a way that our Lord may bring out his teaching concerning matrimony, which is the main interest of the incident. Our Lord had really answered the question in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. v. 31, 32), but possibly on an occasion when no Pharisees were present. It is suggested that they now maliciously desired to involve our Lord with Herod who had married his brother's wife, and in whose territory our Lord had lived so long. Certainly the words "tempting him" lend colour to this view.

3. This verse, and verses 4 and 5, are peculiar to Mk.

4. Moses permitted to write a bill of divorce. These words refer to Deut. xxiv. 1-3, where, however, Moses gives no formal approval of the custom of divorce, but merely treats it as then prevalent, tolerates it, and forbids a certain excess in connection with its use. There is emphasis on the word "permitted."

5. The hardness of your heart. The "your" is emphatic. Our Lord points out to the Pharisees, "who trusted in themselves and despised others," that for them "to shelter themselves under the temporary recognition of a necessary evil was to confess that they had not outgrown the moral stature of their fathers, as, of course, they flattered themselves they had." "All the house of Israel are of a hard forehead and an obstinate heart" (Ezech. iii. 7). Cp. Rom. ii. 4, 5.

6. God made them male and female. The words are a quotation from Gen. i. 27.

7. This verse and verse 8 are a quotation from Gen. ii. 23, 24, where they are words spoken by Adam. (Cp. 1 Cor. vi. 16; and Eph. v. 31.) This incident is also recorded, and more fully, by Mt. (xix. 3-12).—Shall cleave to—a strong word—lit.: "shall glue himself to."

9. What God hath joined together. Thus did our Lord restore to matrimony its original character and dignity, of being both one

- 10 And in the house again his disciples asked him concerning the same thing.
- 11 And he saith to them: Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her.
- 12 And if the wife shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.
- 13 And they brought to him young children, that he might touch them. And the disciples rebuked them that brought them.
- 14 Whom when Jesus saw, he was much displeased, and saith to them: Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.
- 15 Amen I say to you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter into it.

and indissoluble. (Cp. Lk. xvi. 18; 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11; 1 Tim. ii. 13-15.)

10. In the house—a touch of St. Mark. (Cp. vii. 17; ix. 27.) —Asked him—"questioned him." They were clearly much disturbed by the severity of what our Lord had so definitely laid down.

11. Against her—*i.e.*, to her detriment, for though she be put away, she is and still remains his wife.

12. This verse is peculiar to St. Mark.

13. They brought to him young children. Hebrew mothers were accustomed in this manner to seek a blessing for their children from the Jewish Rabbis, who were wont to lay their hands on them. (Cp. Mt. xix. 13; Lk. xviii. 15.) For "young children" Lk. has "infants," but probably the children were of all ages up to twelve. Cp. Gen. xlviii. 14: "And Jacob, stretching forth his right hand, put it upon the head of Ephraim, the younger brother; and the left upon the head of Manasses who was the elder, changing his hands."—Rebuked them. Clearly the disciples had not understood our Lord's teaching in ix. 35, 36.

14. Whom when Jesus saw. Our Lord was in the house, and the mothers with their children were in the street by the open door. St. Mark thus graphically describes our Lord "lifting up his eyes" and seeing that a multitude of little ones desired to come to him.—He was much displeased. This feature is peculiar to St. Mark. St. Peter, as an eye-witness, would carefully note and report all that our Lord expressed by his countenance, gestures, sound of voice, etc.—And forbid them not. There is no "and" in the Greek, and the words are more emphatic without it. The lesson was an important one, and was given strongly.—Of such—not "of these," but "of such." It is not children only, but "the being converted and becoming *as* little

And embracing them and laying his hands upon them, **16** he blessed them.

And when he was gone forth into the way, a certain **17** man running up and kneeling before him, asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may receive life everlasting?

And Jesus saith to him, Why callest thou me good? **18** None is good but one, that is God.

Thou knowest the commandments: Do not commit **19**

children," which obtains the kingdom of God. (Cp. Mt. xviii. 3; 1 Cor. iii. 18.) For the sentiment of this verse, cp. Ps. cxxx.: "Lord, my heart is not exalted, nor are my eyes lofty, neither have I walked in great matters, nor in wonderful things above me."

16. And embracing them—a touch of St. Mark.—**He blessed them**—"He blesses them." The Greek word is a compound which occurs only here in N.T., and has an intensive force. He blessed them, not perfunctorily, but fervently.

17. Gone forth into the way—a detail peculiar to Mk. and clearly supplied by an eye-witness of the scene.—**A certain man**. Mt. says he was a "young man"; Lk. says "he was a ruler," probably of a local synagogue. (Cp. Mt. xix. 16; Lk. xviii. 18.)—**Running up and kneeling before him**—a touch of St. Mark.—**Asked him**—"earnestly asked him." The same question is put by a lawyer to our Lord in Lk. x. 25. His words and salutation of our Lord were not flattery, but came from a good heart.—**Life everlasting**. This term has its origin in the O.T., and is intensified by our Lord, who "had the words of eternal life." Cp. Daniel xii. 2: "and many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake, some unto life everlasting, and others unto reproach, to see it always." It was in common use among the Jews as a summary of the blessings to flow from the kingdom of the Messias both now and hereafter.

18. Why callest thou me good? This question of our Lord appears strange at first sight, for presumably the young man knew that God only was good in the absolute perfect sense. Cp. 1 Kings ii. 2: "There is none holy as the Lord is, for there is no other beside thee, and there is none strong like our God." But our Lord wished to set him thinking, as St. Bede and others tell us. It is as though he said to him: "You call me good because of my works and words. Consider a moment whether those works and words do not point to something higher than mere earthly goodness. In a word, do they not point to my being God?"

19. Thou knowest the commandments. The commandments here quoted by our Lord regulate man's duty to his neighbour, probably because true piety is more easily discoverable in these.

adultery, do not kill, do not steal, bear not false witness, do no fraud, honour thy father and mother.

- 20 But he answering, said to him: Master, all these things I have observed from my youth.
- 21 And Jesus looking on him, loved him, and said to him: One thing is wanting unto thee: go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.
- 22 Who being struck sad at that saying, went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.
- 23 And Jesus looking round about, saith to his disciples:

No one would think of denying that he was serving God; but was he "wanting in comforting them that weep, and walking with them that mourn? was he slow to visit the sick, for by these things we are confirmed in love?" (Ecclus. vii. 38, 39). Mt. makes our Lord quote these commandments in answer to a second question from the young man as to which commandments he was expected to have kept.—**Do no fraud.** This command is peculiar to Mk. The order is given differently by all three Synoptists.—**Honour thy father and mother.** The position of this command is curious. It comes emphatically at the end of all. There may be an allusion to the fact that it had been so disregarded in the teaching and practice of the Pharisees. (Cp. vii. 10-13.)

20. Master=Teacher.—I have observed—"I have carefully observed." The Greek verb is very strong.—**From my youth.** Mt. adds: "what is yet wanting to me?" (xix. 20).

21. Looking on him, loved him—a touch of St. Mark. (Cp. x. 27; Lk. xxii. 61.) And "our Lord knew what was in man" (Jn. ii. 25).—**One thing is wanting.** This is our Lord's direct answer to the question furnished by Mt., who here adds: "if thou wilt be perfect" (xix. 21).—**Sell whatsoever thou hast.** The demand was a large one, but no half measures can satisfy our Lord. His true disciples "leave *all* things and follow him"; they make their own the words of St. Paul in 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. For the literal fulfilment of our Lord's words, cp. Acts ii. 44, 45; iv. 34, 35.

22. Being struck sad—"lowering," with a cloud upon his face. The Greek word here used occurs only once more in N.T., in Mt. xvi. 3, where it is used of the sky becoming "red and lowering." (Cp. 2 Cor. vii. 10.) Its vividness, which with the rest of the passage is peculiar to Mk., suggests its being derived from an eye-witness, probably St. Peter, who noted the change that came over the young man's countenance. The thorns of riches choked the young man, as our Lord had said. (Cp. Mk. iv. 7.) "Gold and silver have destroyed many" (Ecclus. viii. 3)

23. Jesus looking round about—a touch of St. Mark.

How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God.

And the disciples were astonished at his words. But **24** Jesus again answering, saith to them: Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God?

It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a **25** needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Who wondered the more, saying among themselves: **26** Who then can be saved?

And Jesus looking on them saith, With men it is **27**

24. And the disciples were astonished at his words—only in Mk. The Greek word is a very strong one, denoting the greatest amazement. The Twelve had just been told that they must "become as little children"; now they are told "to sell all they have," and that the possession of riches is an almost certain obstacle to entering the kingdom of God. Their thought would be: "What next will he demand of us?" for our Lord always "makes as though he would go further" (Lk. xxiv. 28).—**Children**—a term of unusual tenderness, used only here in N.T. in reference to the Twelve. This saying of our Lord, with its striking variation between the "having" riches (verse 23) and the "trusting in" riches (verse 24), is recorded only by Mk.

25. A camel to pass through the eye of a needle. This figure has been variously interpreted: (a) some have rendered it an "anchor-rope," as though the word for "camel" in Greek was *kamilon*, and not *kamelon*; (b) others think it refers to a sidegate for foot-passengers, close by the principal gate at Jerusalem, called in the East "the eye of a needle," and so narrow that a camel could go through it only with the greatest difficulty; but (c) it is best to understand the words literally, as an expression of what is practically impossible: "with men it *is* impossible, but not with God, for *all* things are possible with God." "Blessed is the rich man that is found without blemish, and that hath not gone after gold, nor put his trust in money nor in treasures. Who is he, and we will praise him? for he hath done wonderful things in his life" (Ecclus. xxxi. 8, 9). "Give me neither beggary nor riches: give me only the necessities of life: lest perhaps being filled, I should be tempted to deny, and say: Who is the Lord? or being compelled by poverty, I should steal, and forswear the name of my God" (Prov. xxx. 8, 9).

26. Who wondered the more—"they were filled with unbounded astonishment." The phrase "among themselves" pictures to us how utterly unhinged the Apostles were by this novel teaching concerning riches.

27. Looking on them—for the third time in this incident.—

impossible; but not with God: for all things are possible with God.

- 28 And Peter began to say unto him: Behold, we have left all things, and have followed thee.
- 29 Jesus answering, said: Amen I say to you, there is no man who hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my sake and for the Gospel,
- 30 Who shall not receive an hundred times as much, now in this time: houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come life everlasting.
- 31 But many that are first, shall be last; and the last, first.

But not with God. Cp. Gen. xviii. 14: "Is there anything hard to God." (Cp. Lk. i. 37.)

28. And Peter began to say. Mt. xix. 27 has: "Then Peter, answering, said"—a phrase which shows even more sharply that this remark characteristically grew out of the words just spoken by our Lord. The "we" and the "all" are emphatic, and Mt. adds: "what, therefore, shall *we* have?" with another emphatic "we."

29. Jesus answering. The first part of our Lord's answer is recorded only by Mt. (xix. 28), and concerns the Twelve alone. The part recorded here by Mk. affects all.—House or brethren. Lk. (xviii. 29) adds: "wife," and omits "lands."—For my sake and for the gospel. The words "for the Gospel" are peculiar to Mk. Mt. has: "for my Name's sake"; Lk. has "for the sake of the kingdom of God." Mk.'s phrase has already occurred in viii. 35. References "to the Gospel" are rare in Mt., altogether wanting in Lk., but frequent in Mk. (Cp. i. 1; i. 15; viii. 35; xiv. 9.)

30. An hundred times as much, now in this time. Mk. thus puts it, with his usual fondness for *numbers*; but Lk. has it more simply: "much more in this present time." St. Mark alone specifies the *present* rewards, and he describes them in terms of the sacrifice. Thus "all they that believed were together, and had all things common" (Acts ii. 44); thus St. Paul speaks of the Galatians as "my little children of whom I am in labour again, until Christ be formed in you" (Gal. iv. 19). "The Master comes, and calls for us" (Jn. xi. 28), and we must "leave all things," and obey the call. But we shall surely find other brethren, other homes, other friends, even in this life, to compensate for those we have sacrificed for the sake of our Lord.—With persecutions—only in Mk. (Cp. Jn. xv. 20; xvi. 33; 2 Cor. xii. 10; 2 Tim. iii. 11.)

31. This saying of our Lord occurs also in Mt. xx. 16; Lk. xiii. 30; Lk. omits it here. As an illustration of the lesson to be

And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem: **32** and Jesus went before them, and they were astonished; and following were afraid. And taking again the twelve, he began to tell them the things that should befall him.

Saying: Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son **33** of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests, and to the scribes and ancients, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles.

derived from it, our Lord here spoke the parable of the labourers in the vineyard (Mt. xxi. 1-6). "See Judas," writes St. Bede, "changed from an Apostle into an apostate, and say: many that were first are last: see the thief on the cross changed into a confessor of the faith, and rejoicing with Christ in Paradise, and say: many that were last are become first."

32. This most pictorial verse is peculiar to St. Mark, as far as the word "afraid." Every detail should be carefully noted. —**Going up.** The Greek verb is used specially of journeys to Jerusalem, which stands near the highest point of the backbone of Palestine, and cannot be approached from any quarter without an ascent. Our Lord seems now to have descended from Ephraim to the high road in order to join the caravans of Galilæan pilgrims going up to Jerusalem. —**Jesus went before them** = "was ever leading the way in front of them." Jerusalem, as the Apostles well knew, was always a place of danger for our Lord. At the slightest provocation, the Jews there were ready to stone him (cp. Jn. vii. 12; viii. 59; ix. 22; x. 20; x. 31); hence they approached the city with fear; but our Lord desired his Sacred Passion, and "was straitened until he was baptized with its baptism," and so pressed on to the place where it was now so soon to be accomplished (Lk. xii. 50). —**Were astonished.** Again one of Mk.'s strong words to express great emotion. The Apostles began to realize that what our Lord had said about his Passion was really coming true. —**And following** = "and those who followed." These included not only the Twelve, but also other pilgrims on their way to the Holy City. —**And taking again** = "and taking them aside again." (Cp. Mt. xx. 17-19; Lk. xviii. 31-34.) What our Lord now said is intended for the Twelve only. —**To tell them.** Mt. adds: "secretly." —**The things.** The use of the plural implies that this third prediction of the Passion is to be more detailed than the two previous ones, as indeed it is. Our Lord openly uses the word "betrayed," and adds the details of being mocked and scourged (Mt., Mk., and Lk.), of being spat upon (Mk. and Lk.), and of being crucified (Mt. only). Both Mk. and Lk. speak of his being *killed*, but do not use the word "crucified." The prediction in all three Synopsts concludes with a prophecy of the Resurrection.

33. Deliver him to the Gentiles. This, too, is an additional detail in this third prediction of the Passion, and is a very marked

- 34 And they shall mock him, and spit on him, and scourge him, and kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.
- 35 And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come to him, saying: Master, we desire that whatsoever we shall ask, thou wouldst do it for us:
- 36 But he said to them: What would you that I should do for you?
- 37 And they said: Grant to us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.

one. "To the Gentiles" means "to the Roman power," and that our Lord should be delivered to a heathen power was no small an aggravation of the sin of the Jews. (Cp. Jn. xviii. 35; Acts iii. 13.) St. Luke concludes the incident with the words: "and they understood *none* of these things, and this word was hid from them, and they understood not the things that were said."

34. They shall mock him. Cp. Is. l. 6: "I have given my body to the strikers, and my cheeks to them that plucked them: I have not turned away my face from them that rebuked me, and spat upon me."—And scourge him. "He was wounded for our iniquities: he was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed" (Is. liii. 5). "I am prepared for scourges, and my sorrow is always before me" (Ps. xxxvii.). "I became as a man without help" (Ps. lxxxvii.), when "the wicked wrought upon my back and prolonged their iniquity" (Ps. cxxviii.). "They tore me with wound upon wound, and rushed upon me as a giant" (Job xvi. 15).

35. And James and John come to him. Mt. (xx. 20-24) represents their mother, Salome, as making the bold petition, but he also says that her sons were with her. (Cp. 3 Kings ii. 20.)—Master—"Teacher."—Whatsoever we shall ask. The form of the words reminds us of our Lord's words to the Twelve at the Last Supper: "Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do" (Jn. xiv. 13; xv. 16; xvi. 23, 24). Commentators differ as to the motive of this strange petition: most of them consider the two brothers to have been guilty of ambition; but some think that they merely made a petition, not well thought out, to be in some special way associated with our Lord, wherever he was.

36. What would you. Our Lord used the same words to blind Bartimeus (x. 51). Cp. Mt. xx. 32.

37. That we may sit. In making this request, the two disciples apparently had in mind what our Lord had said in answer to St. Peter (verse 29)—words which are not recorded by Mk., but only by Mt. (xix. 28). They were as follows: "You who have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit

And Jesus said to them: You know not what you ask. **38**
Can you drink of the chalice that I drink of: or be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am baptized?

But they said to him: We can. And Jesus saith **39**
to them: You shall indeed drink of the chalice that I drink of: and with the baptism wherewith I am baptized, you shall be baptized.

on the seat of his majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." So they here ask that their two thrones may be the chief among those twelve. The right hand was the place of honour (cp. Acts vii. 55; Rom. viii. 34), and next to it, the immediate left. For "in thy glory," Mt. has "in thy kingdom." Some recollection also of the glory of the Transfiguration may have been in the mind of St. John.

38. What you ask—"what you are asking for yourselves," with an implied censure of the selfishness which had dictated the petition. Our Lord, with his wonted gentleness, only charges his two disciples directly with total ignorance of what their petition implied.—**Can you drink.** The imagery of the disciples' petition is fully sustained in our Lord's question to them. The cup, indeed, belongs to the banquet at which the King sits between his honoured guests, but it is also a summary of what he must suffer, for "he is the Propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world" (1 Jn. ii. 2). A chalice, mingled by his Father, will soon be offered to him to drink, and in his Agony on Olivet he will pray that it might pass from him, if it be possible. (Cp. Jn. xviii. 11.) The chalice is a familiar figure, especially in the Psalms, of our portion in life. Cp. Ps. xv. 15: "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup, my chalice which inebriateth me, how good is it." (Cp. Ps. xx. 5.)—**That I drink of.** Mt. has: "that I shall drink of." The vivid present in Mk. is most expressive, telling us that the drinking of the cup of pain was co-extensive with the *whole life* of our Lord on earth. He was "in labours and sorrows from his youth."—**Or be baptized . . .** baptized. These words are peculiar to Mk. (Cp. Lk. xii. 50.) The figure of being immersed in the waters of sorrow and tribulation is very frequent in the Psalms. Cp. Ps. lxviii. 2, 16: "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in even unto my soul: let not the tempest of water drown me, nor the deep swallow me up." Cp. Ps. lxxxvii. 18: "Thy terrors have troubled me: they have come round about me like water all the day."

39. We can. Similar words are recorded as having been said by St. Thomas and by St. Peter. (Cp. Jn. xi. 16; Lk. xxii. 33.) The words show how truly the disciples meant what they said when they made their petition, yet "they knew not what they said." Our Lord showed by his reply that he appreciated their promptitude. Later on they would be able to say with St. Paul:

- 40 But to sit on my right hand, or on my left, is not mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared.
- 41 And the ten hearing it, began to be much displeased at James and John.
- 42 But Jesus calling them, saith to them: You know that they who seem to rule over the Gentiles, lord it over them: and their princes have power over them.
- 43 But it is not so among you: but whosoever will be greater, shall be your minister.

"I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 13), but not now. They were still as "children, who had not put away the things of a child" (1 Cor. xiii. 11).—**You shall indeed drink.** They shared with the other Apostles the persecutions incident to the apostolic calling; they "rejoiced that they were found worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus" (Acts v. 41). St. James was the first martyr of their band, "being killed with a sword" (Acts xii. 2); and St. John was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil for his Master's name, and bore some years of exile in the island of Patmos (Apoc. i. 9). Cp. Rom. viii. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 11.

40 **To give to you.** The Greek omits the words "to you." Hence translate: "is not mine to give to any save to those for whom it is prepared." There is emphasis on the word "prepared." The Apostles were not ready for their reward *then*: "no one," as St. Paul says, "shall be crowned, unless he has bravely striven" (2 Tim. ii. 5). Cp. 2 Tim. iv. 8; Apoc. xxii. 12. Mt. adds: "for whom it is prepared by my Father"—a form of words frequent both in Mt. and Lk., but not found in Mk. (Cp. Rom. ix. 23; 1 Cor. ii. 9; Heb. xi. 16.)

41. **Hearing it**—"coming to hear of it." The interview between our Lord and the mother of the sons of Zebedee had been in private. The old trouble of ix. 33 had broken out afresh, and no time must be lost in allaying it. Our Lord does so in words of singular gentleness, and without making the least allusion to what has taken place.

42. **Calling them**—"having called them to himself."—**You know**—"you know well"—and on reflection they would at once, as pious Jews, turn away with horror from "all things which the heathen seek" (Mt. vi. 32), and be distressed and surprised that even for a moment they had allowed themselves to embrace their spirit.—**Lord it over them.** The Greek word implies a harsh and arrogant rule. (Cp. 1 Pet. v. 3; Lk. xxii. 25-27.)—**Have power over them**—"exercise power oppressively over them."

43. **But it is not so among you.** How wonderfully does our Lord in this verse and the next give his disciples a lesson in humility, with fresh light as to what true greatness consists in!

And whosoever will be first among you shall be the 44
servant of all.

For the Son of man also is not come to be ministered 45
unto, but to minister, and to give his life a redemption
for many.

And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of 46
Jericho, with his disciples, and a very great multitude,
Bartimeus the blind man, the son of Timeus, sat by the
way side begging.

What a complete answer is furnished to the over-bold and somewhat selfish petition of James and John! (Cp. Mt. xx. 25-28.)—**Whosoever will be**—"whosoever desires to be."—**Shall be your minister.** Cp. 1 Cor. ix. 19; 2 Cor. iv. 5; Gal. v. 13.

44. **The servant of all.** Cp. Jn. xiii. 13-17.

45. With the picture which our Lord here gives of himself, and of his spirit and mission in the world, compare St. Paul's words (1 Phil. ii. 7-11): "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal to God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant: he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above every name: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and in hell; and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father."—**To give his life.** Cp. Jn. x. 18; Gal. i. 4; Tit. ii. 4; Heb. ix. 11-16.—**A redemption**—"a ransom." (Cp. Rom. iii. 24; Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 12-14; Heb. ix. 1-12.)—**For many**—*i.e.*, for all. (Cp. Jn. i. 9; xvii. 2; Rom. v. 18; viii. 32; xi. 32; 2 Cor. v. 14; 1 Tim. ii. 4; Tit. ii. 11; 1 Jn. ii. 2; 2 Pet. iii. 9.)

46. **They came to Jericho**—"they come to Jericho," a vivid present. Jericho is mentioned in the Gospels only here, and in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. x.), but doubtless our Lord had passed through it more than once, when journeying to Jerusalem. It lies deep down in the Jordan valley, and the steep ascent from thence to Jerusalem, from 1,200 feet below to 2,500 feet above the sea-level, was a six hour's journey. The town was surrounded by towers and castles. It contained a theatre and spacious circus built by Herod, while a great stone aqueduct brought a copious supply of water to the city. The Roman military road ran through it. Both Mt. and Mk. omit the story of Zacchæus (Lk. xix.). Mt. here speaks of *two* blind men being healed (Mt. xx.); Mk. mentions only one, as he was the better known, and the spokesman for the two.—**As he went out of Jericho.** St. Luke says: "when he drew nigh to Jericho." This seeming contradiction is commonly explained by the fact that the blind man first cried out to our Lord as he entered the

- 47 Who when he had heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, began to cry out, and to say: Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.
- 48 And many rebuked him, that he might hold his peace, but he cried a great deal the more: Son of David, have mercy on me.
- 49 And Jesus standing still, commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying to him: Be of better comfort: arise, he calleth thee.
- 50 Who casting off his garment leaped up, and came to him.
- 51 And Jesus answering, said to him: What wilt thou that I should do to thee? And the blind man said to him: Rabboni, that I may see.

city, but, failing to draw his attention, stationed himself again, later on, at the opposite gate of the city, as our Lord was departing, and then repeated his petition, and obtained the cure for himself and his companion. Many commentators, however, consider that the miracle recorded by Lk. is different to the one recorded by Mt. and Mk. (Mt. xx. 29; Lk. xix. 2).—**A very great multitude**—probably of pilgrims who had come from Peraea and Galilee, and met at this central point to go up to Jerusalem for the Passover, "which was near at hand."—**Bartimeus**. Only Mk. gives his name, with the explanation of its meaning. (Cp. Acts iv. 36.)—**The blind man**—"the well-known blind man."

47. **Son of David**—the popular designation of the Messias. (Cp. Jn. vii. 42.) Mt. has "O Lord, thou Son of David." The words "Son of David," as an appellative of our Lord, occur only here in Mk.

48. **And many rebuked**. According to Lk., the rebuke came from those "that went before." There were many voices pitched against that of Bartimaeus, but it was to his voice alone that the ears of our Lord were attentive.

49. **Commanded him to be called**. According to some MSS. we should here read: "[Jesus] said: Call him."—**Be of better comfort: arise, he calleth thee**. St. Mark alone preserves these words of the crowd to Bartimaeus. They no longer rebuke, but sympathize.

50. This verse, so full of picturesque detail, is also peculiar to St. Mark. (Cp. Heb. xii. 1.)—**His garment**—*i.e.*, his outer garment or robe.

51. **Rabboni**. A more reverential form than Rabbi, though bearing the same meaning. Mk. alone preserves the Aramaic original. Both Mt. and Lk. have "Lord." (Cp. Jn. xx. 16.)—**That I may see**—"that I may recover my sight." (Cp. Acts ix. 12.)

And Jesus saith to him: Go thy way, thy faith hath **52** made thee whole. And immediately he saw, and followed him in the way.

CHAPTER XI

OUR LORD'S ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM ON PALM SUNDAY—THE CURSING OF THE BARREN FIG TREE—THE SECOND CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE—THE QUESTION: "BY WHAT AUTHORITY DOEST THOU THESE THINGS?"

AND when they were drawing near to Jerusalem and to **1** Bethania, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth two of his disciples,

52. Go thy way. Mt. records that our Lord touched the eyes of Bartimaeus.—**In the way**—*i.e.*, to Jerusalem and to Bethany, where six days before the Passover our Lord found a place of rest (Jn. xii. 1).

1. The order of events should here be carefully noted. Our Lord reached Bethany on the evening of the Friday before the first Palm Sunday. He spent Saturday there, and in the evening sat down to a festal meal provided by Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, at the house of one, Simon, who had been a leper (Mt. xxvi. 6; and Jn. xii. 1). At this feast, he was anointed by St. Mary Magdalen (Jn. xii. 3), and during the night a council of the Jews was convened to consider the expedience and possibility of putting not only our Lord, but also Lazarus, to death (Jn. xii. 10).—**To Jerusalem.** The Greek has the words "to Bethphage" inserted here, which are omitted in the Douay translation. They occur also in Mt. and Lk. Bethphage, which means "the house of figs," was a small village situated on the eastern slope of Olivet, on the high road from Jericho to Jerusalem.—**To Bethania**—the abode of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. The name means "the house of obedience," or "the house of affliction."—**At the Mount of Olives**—"as they approached the Mount of Olives."—**He sendeth two of his disciples.** Note the vivid present in the verb. The minuteness of St. Mark's account suggests that St. Peter was one of the two selected on this occasion. He was probably accompanied by St. John.

- 2 And saith to them: Go into the village that is over against you, and immediately at your coming in thither, you shall find a colt tied, upon which no man yet hath sat: loose him, and bring him.
- 3 And if any man shall say to you, What are you doing? say ye that the Lord hath need of him: and immediately he will let him come hither.
- 4 And going their way they found the colt tied before the gate without, in the meeting of two ways: and they loose him.

2. The village—*i.e.*, Bethphage.—Immediately at your coming. Mt. is content with "immediately," Lk. has: "at your entering in"; the combination of the two phrases in Mk. is characteristically precise.—A colt tied. So also Lk. Mt. has "an ass tied and a colt with her." (Cp. Mt. xxi. 1; Lk. xix. 29; Jn. xii. 12.)—Upon which no man yet hath sat. So also in Lk. Cp. "a sepulchre wherein never yet any man had been laid" (Lk. xxiii. 53). For sacred purposes it was customary to select animals which had never yet borne the yoke. This custom held good not only amongst the Jews, but also with the Greeks and Romans. Cp. Num. xix. 2: "This is the observance of the victim, which the Lord hath ordained: Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee a red cow of full age, in which there is no blemish, and which hath not carried the yoke." (Cp. Deut. xxi. 3; 1 Kings vi. 7.) "In the East the ass is held in high esteem, and vies with the horse in favour. Among the Jews it was equally valued as a beast of burden, for work in the field, at the mill, or for riding. In contrast to the horse, which had been introduced by Solomon from Egypt, and was used specially for war, it was the symbol of peace." Every Jew expected that the Messiah would enter Jerusalem riding on an ass, as the Prophet Zacharias had foretold (Zach. ix. 9)—a prophecy quoted by St. Matthew (xxi. 5). No act, therefore, could more significantly proclaim that the Messiah and King had come in very truth.

3. Say ye that the Lord hath need of him. What majesty and authority in the phrase! It is the hour of our Lord's triumph, and "he saith to one, go, and he goeth, and to another, come, and he cometh; and to his servant, do this, and he doeth it." The owner of the colt may have been a secret disciple of our Lord.

4. Before the gate without, in the meeting of two ways—details peculiar to Mk.—They loose him. Note the absolute obedience of the Apostles to their master. They must have seen men standing near, and naturally would say to them: "We want this colt for the Lord; may we take him?" but this they had not been told to do. Only if spoken to were they to speak: so, without a word, "they loose him."

And some of them that stood there said to them: What 5
do you loosing the colt?

Who said to them as Jesus had commanded them: 6
and they let him go with them.

And they brought the colt to Jesus: and they lay their 7
garments on him, and he sat upon him.

And many spread their garments in the way: and 8
others cut down boughs from the trees, and strewed
them in the way.

And they that went before and they that followed, 9
cried, saying: Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh in the
name of the Lord.

5. Some of them. According to Lk., they were the owners.

7. And they brought the colt to Jesus. Mt. has: "they brought the ass and the colt." The colt, untamed, and tied at the back gate, as if ready for a rider, and "in the meeting of two ways," that is, at the meeting of the past and the future, is a symbol of the Gentile world to be brought to our Lord from "the streets and lanes" of heathendom (Lk. xiv. 21), while the she-ass symbolizes God's chosen people, long used to the yoke of the Mosaic Law.—They lay their garments on him. Mt. has "on them." It has been thought that our Lord probably rode on *both* the ass and the colt—*i.e.*, on the ass first and then on the colt, to signify his rejection of the Jews and his welcome to the Gentiles. The disciples did not till later understand the full significance of the scene. (Cp. Jn. xii. 16.)

8. Others cut down boughs from the trees. So Mt. Lk. makes no mention of any cutting of branches at all. Jn. has "palm-branches from palm-trees," and his words seem specially to refer to the *second* crowd of people, which came out to meet our Lord from Jerusalem itself, rather than to that which accompanied him from Bethany (Jn. xii. 12, 13). Thus to carry branches of palm on solemn and public occasions was quite common. "And they entered into the castle the three and twentieth day of the second month, with thanksgiving and branches of palm-trees and harps and cymbals, and hymns and canticles, because the great enemy was destroyed out of Israel" (1 Mach. xiii. 51). Cp. 2 Mach. x. 7.

9. Hosanna. Mt. adds: "to the Son of David." The word Hosanna means: "Save now, I beseech thee," and it and the following words are taken from verses 25 and 26 of Ps. cxvii., forming the concluding portion of the Hallel (=Lauds), which the Jews used to sing at the Pasch, the Feast of Tabernacles, and on certain other occasions. The Hallel began at Ps. cxii., and its last Psalm was considered to be specially Messianic. Thus a quotation from it was most fitting as the theme of their chorus of praise on this occasion. "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O

- 10 Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh: Hosanna in the highest.
- 11 And he entered into Jerusalem, into the temple: and having viewed all things round about, when now the eventide was come, he went out to Bethania with the twelve.

thou most mighty: with thy comeliness and thy beauty set out, proceed prosperously, and reign": so had the Psalmist sung of the Messiah (Ps. lxiv. 5); and the words sum up the feelings of the crowd towards our Lord on this occasion.

10. Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh. These words are peculiar to Mk. The kingdom of their father, David, is identical with that of the Messiah. Cp. 2 Kings vii. 16: "Thy house shall be faithful, and thy kingdom for ever before thy face, and thy throne shall be firm for ever." It is here that St. Luke places the scene of our Lord's weeping over Jerusalem, as he "drew near to it, and saw it" (Lk. xix. 41-44).—In the highest—*i.e.*, in the highest places, or in heaven.

11. Into the temple—"the temple enclosure." "And presently the Lord whom you seek, and the Angel of the testament whom you desire, shall come to his temple. Behold he cometh, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. iii. 1). "The temple-enclosure was a vast area, containing many divisions, chambers, and porticos, together with an open space called the Court of the Gentiles, because Gentiles as well as Jews were allowed to enter thus far. Within this enclosure, at its southern end, stood the Temple itself, which was entered from the east by the gate called the Beautiful Gate (Acts iii. 2). It was a magnificent building, erected by Herod the Great, to take the place of the humble building of Esdras. (Cp. 1 Esdras 1-41.) On entering it, first came a large court called the Court of the Women, because Jewish women could only penetrate thus far; then came the Court of Israel, as far as which Jewish men could go; then the Court of the Priests, in which stood the great brazen altar, the loaves of proposition, the golden candlestick, and the altar of incense. Within this Court of the Priests, to the westward, was the Holy of Holies, entered only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, by the high-priest." "Six and forty years was this temple in building" (Jn. ii. 20). St. Matthew (xxi. 10-16) gives us a vivid picture of the scene in Jerusalem when our Lord actually entered it. "The whole city was moved," he says. St. John connects their enthusiasm for our Lord more directly with the recent miracle of the raising of Lazarus (Jn. xii. 18).—Having viewed all things round about—as with a keen searchlight—a strong and comprehensive phrase, peculiar to Mk. Cp. Sophonias i. 12: "It shall come to pass at that time that I will search Jerusalem with lamps." How many events in his life must now have been present to our Lord's mind, as thus he

And the next day, when they came out from Bethania, **12**
he was hungry.

And when he had seen afar off a fig tree having leaves, **13**
he came, if perhaps he might find anything on it. And
when he was come to it, he found nothing but leaves.
For it was not the time for figs.

And answering he said to it: May no man hereafter **14**
eat fruit of thee any more for ever. And his disciples
heard it.

surveyed the Temple precincts! There he had been presented to the Lord as a little child: there he had taught at the age of twelve years: there he had taught and explained so much to his disciples.—**When now the eventide was come**—"it being already full late." St. John adds to the events of Palm Sunday the interview of certain Gentiles with our Lord through the instrumentality of St. Philip and St. Andrew (Jn. xii. 19-36). Probably our Lord spent the nights of Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday before his Passion in the open air on the Mount of Olives.—**He went out to Bethania**—where already he had found a welcome, thus fulfilling his own directions to his disciples: "in the same house remain" (Lk. x. 7). Cp. Mt. x. 11.

12. And the next day—*i.e.*, the Monday in Holy Week. (Cp. Mt. xxi. 18.)—**He was hungry**. Cp. Mt. iv. 2; Jn. iv. 31-34.

13. Had seen afar off. Rightly "afar off," for the fig-tree was a symbol of God's chosen people, called to his service and friendship from the beginning, and faithless through all the long ages of waiting for the Desired of all nations.—**A fig-tree having leaves**. Mt. says it was a "solitary fig-tree." The fig-tree in Palestine puts out its fruit before its leaves: thus, though "it was not the time for figs" (a remark made only by Mk.), this tree *ought* to have been rich in fruit, since it was so rich in leaves. But it had "nothing but leaves": it was the very type of a fair profession, without performance, of those "who say and do not." (Cp. Lk. xix. 42.) All this took place in April, and the season of figs was not until June for the early kind, or August for the ordinary crop.

14. And answering. The answer is to the invitation which the tree by its foliage seemed so cordially to offer to the hungry traveller. This fig-tree was a symbol of the Jewish nation, and our Lord had used it as such not long before in his parable of the fig-tree (Lk. xiii. 6-9). That nation was so exclusive, and so boastful of its privileges, yet so destitute of the fruit which those privileges led one to expect from them.—**And his disciples heard it**—peculiar to Mk. All heard the words: "Peter remembered them" (verse 21). The incident fulfils the prophecy of Micheas (vii. 1): "Woe is me, for I am become as one that gleaneth in autumn the grapes of the vintage; there is no cluster to eat: my soul desired the first ripe figs."

- 15 And they came to Jerusalem. And when he was entered into the temple, he began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the chairs of them that sold doves.
- 16 And he suffered not that any man should carry a vessel through the temple.
- 17 And he taught, saying to them: Is it not written, My house shall be called the house of prayer to all nations? But you have made it a den of thieves.
- 18 Which when the chief priests and the scribes had heard,

15. They came to Jerusalem. Cp. Mt. xxi. 12; Lk. xix. 45. —**Them that sold and bought.** Our Lord made no distinction between sellers and buyers. The merchandise consisted of the Temple requisites, victims for the sacrifices, oxen, sheep, and doves, and the wine, oil, salt, etc., used in the ritual. "The purchasers were not only pilgrims from a distance, but probably all whose means enabled them to buy on the spot, and thus to escape not only the trouble of bringing the animals with them, but also the official inspection which was compulsory in such cases." —**Money-changers.** The Temple tribute of half a shekel a year (about 1s. 2d.) had to be paid by every Jew in Jewish coin. (Cp. Mt. xvii. 24.) A large profit would naturally be reaped at the approach of the Passover from the many pilgrims who assembled from Gentile countries, and brought with them Greek and Roman money. We should remember that this is the *second* time that our Lord has thus cleansed the Temple, and on both occasions it was at the Feast of the Passover. (Cp. Jn. ii. 13-17.) —**And the chairs of them that sold doves.** These are specially mentioned, for doves were required by the Law for the purification of women (cp. Lk. ii. 22), for the cleansing of lepers, and on certain other occasions.

16. This most striking and pictorial verse depicting our Lord's power and authority, and his zeal for his Father's house, is peculiar to St. Mark.

17. He taught—"he kept on teaching." Our Lord's drastic action would have brought many around him, and thus afford him scope for instruction. Our Lord's quotation is from Isaias (lvi. 7), and the words have special force here, for in the original they have reference to the blessing that would ensue from the advent of the Messias. —**To all nations.** These words are peculiar to St. Mark, and have a special appropriateness in the present context, for the part of the Temple which our Lord had just cleansed was the Court of the Gentiles. —**A den of thieves.** Notice the boldness and scathing power of these words; also the emphatic "you." The quotation is from Jer. vii. 11.

18. The chief priests and the Scribes. For the first time in the

they sought how they might destroy him. For they feared him, because the whole multitude was in admiration at his doctrine.

And when evening was come, he went forth out of **19** the city.

And when they passed by in the morning they saw **20** the fig tree dried up from the roots.

And Peter remembering, said to him: Rabbi, be- **21** hold the fig tree, which thou didst curse, is withered away.

Synoptic Gospels do we find these two classes of men acting in combination against our Lord, though Jn. mentions two previous occasions of their doing so (Jn. vii. 32; and xi. 47, 57). We can see clearly how great a sensation had been caused by our Lord's cleansing of the Temple. St. Jerome, indeed, speaks of it as the greatest of our Lord's miracles. The state of feeling in Jerusalem at this time is vividly portrayed in this verse. "The whole multitude" consisted mainly of people from Galilee and Gentile countries, and these were enthusiastic for our Lord; on the other hand, there is the priestly party, bitterly hostile, seeking to encompass his death, and finding the task by no means an easy one. (Cp. Jn. xi. 48.)—**How they might destroy him.** They did not, however, consider our Lord's words on this very point: "I lay down my life that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from me: but I lay it down of myself: and I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again" (Jn. x. 17, 18).—**For they feared him.** Gladly would they have seen our Lord stoned to death even in the Temple precincts; but this same fate, as they well knew, might await them, as we gather from Jn. x. 31, if they thwarted or arrested our Lord then so popular with the people. (Cp. Lk. xx. 6; Acts v. 26.)—**The whole multitude**—most of whom came from Gentile countries.—**In admiration at his doctrine.** Cp. i. 22; Lk. xix. 48.

19. Evening—*i.e.*, quite late, after a long day.—**He went forth out**—"they went out." (Cp. Lk. xxi. 37.)

20. In the morning—*i.e.*, quite early. This is the early morning of Tuesday in Holy Week, as they were returning to the Holy City.—**From the roots**—a touch of St. Mark. According to Mt. (xxi. 20) the withering of the fig-tree was a subject of much wonder to the Twelve.

21. And Peter remembering. Cp. xiv. 72. The whole of this characteristic verse is peculiar to St. Mark. Cp. Ezech. xvii. 42: "All the trees of the country shall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, and exalted the low tree: and have dried up the green tree, and have caused the dry tree to flourish. I the Lord have spoken and have done it."

- 22 And Jesus answering said to them: Have the faith of God.
- 23 Amen I say to you, that whosoever shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed and be cast into the sea, and shall not stagger in his heart, but believe, that whatsoever he saith shall be done, it shall be done unto him.
- 24 Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you.
- 25 And when you shall stand to pray, forgive, if you have aught against any man; that your Father also, who is in heaven, may forgive you your sins.

22. **The faith of God**—*i.e.*, faith in God. The phrase is peculiar to Mk. Our Lord's answer to St. Peter is remarkable. He leaves the lesson to be learnt from the fig-tree to speak for itself, and passes on to deal with matters of more importance to the Twelve—*viz.*, the need of faith and the power of prayer, for confidence in prayer is born of a lively faith. (Cp. Mt. xvii. 19; Lk. xvii. 6; James ii. 14-26.)

23. **Be thou removed and be cast**—"be thou at once removed, and instantly cast." (Cp. Zach. iv. 7; Mt. xxi. 21.)—**Into the sea.** The sea in the mind of our Lord at the moment was the Dead Sea, which lay below where they then stood, between the mountains of Judaea, and those of Moab. (Cp. Mk. ix. 22.)—**And shall not stagger in his heart.** Cp. Acts x. 20; Rom. iv. 20; James i. 6.

24. **That you shall receive**—"that you are receiving"—a vivid present. The petition is granted at the moment when it is offered.—**And they shall come unto you**—"it shall come unto you." (Cp. James iv. 3; 1 Jn. iii. 22.)

25. **When you shall stand to pray.** The Jews often prayed standing (cp. 1 Kings i. 25; Mt. vi. 5; Lk. xviii. 11, 13); but kneeling was preferred on occasions of great solemnity (cp. 3 Kings viii. 54; Dan. vi. 10; Lk. xxii. 41; Acts xx. 36; xxi. 5; Eph. iii. 14). Sometimes also they prostrated themselves in prayer. (Cp. Judith ix. 1; Mt. xxvi. 39.)—**Your Father also, who is in heaven.** This is the only place where this phrase, so common in Mt., is found in Mk. It is worthy of notice that, of the many things required for true prayer, our Lord in a special way inculcates this one condition of forgiving whatever we have against another, even as in the "Our Father" the *only* petition which is qualified or explained is the one in which we pray: "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." This disposition of mind, as our Lord thus markedly shows, is as necessary to men as it is difficult. It is most accept-

But if you will not forgive, neither will your Father **26** that is in heaven forgive you your sins.

And they come again to Jerusalem. And when he **27** was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests and the scribes and the ancients.

And they say to him: By what authority doest thou **28** these things? and who hath given thee this authority that thou shouldst do these things?

And Jesus answering, said to them: I will also ask you **29** one word, and answer you me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or from **30** men? Answer me.

able to God, while its contrary is an obstacle to obtaining divine forgiveness.

26. This verse is probably an interpolation from St. Matthew (vi. 14, 15).

27. Walking in the temple—a detail peculiar to Mk., quite in keeping with his vivid style of description. Our Lord was probably walking in the Court of the Gentiles, giving instruction at intervals. (Cp. Mt. xxi. 23; Lk. xx. 1.) **Chief priests, scribes, and ancients.** Of these three orders of men the Sanhedrim was composed, and so we gather that this deputation to our Lord was an official one, not merely a private venture. The words "there come to him" imply a determined, hostile purpose to ensnare our Lord in his speech, and if possible to obtain a pretext for stoning him, as at the previous Festival of the Dedication (Jn. x. 30, 33).

28. And they say to him. The question put to our Lord occurs in all three Synoptists, but the words "to do these things" are in Mk. only.—**By what authority**—"by what kind of authority?" Is it that of a Rabbi, or of a Prophet, or of the Messias? The same question had been put to our Lord by the same people, in the same place, three years ago. (Cp. Jn. ii. 18.)—**These things**—notably the expulsion of the salesmen and money-changers. But the word is purposely vague, and, we may add, purposely insulting and contemptuous. Why were they not frank, saying: "these deeds of power and wonder"? (Cp. Jn. v. 36.)

29. I will also ask. Our Lord answers one question by another, as in x. 4 and x. 18. The word "also" occurs in Mt. and Lk., but not in Mk. It should be omitted.—**One word**—"just one preliminary matter for consideration." The word "one" is not so much in opposition to the double question put to our Lord, but points rather to the *simplicity* of the whole issue.

30. The baptism of John. This phrase includes St. John's preaching as well. No one had testified to our Lord more

- 31 But they thought with themselves, saying: If we say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did you not believe him?
- 32 If we say, From men, we fear the people: for all men counted John that he was a prophet indeed.
- 33 And they answering, say to Jesus: We know not. And Jesus answering, saith to them: Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

strongly than St. John (Jn. i. 26, 27; 29-34; 36), and "all men counted John that he was a prophet indeed," while his martyrdom had greatly increased their reverence for his memory. —Answer me. These pointed words occur only in Mk., and give us a vivid picture. One seems to detect a short silence after our Lord had put his question, and to witness the shame and baffled look of his enemies. Our Lord does not repeat his question, but adds, as though to bring them to the point (for they knew the answer well): "Answer me."

31. They thought with themselves. The Greek word expresses long and anxious thought, as of one seeking a way out of a difficulty, and not finding one to suit him.

32. If we say—"but supposing we say" or "shall we then say?"—We fear the people. Lk. (xx. 6) gives the reason: "the whole people will stone us."—A prophet indeed. The word "indeed" is peculiar to Mk.

33. We know not. Cp. 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11: "they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved: therefore God shall send them the operation of error, to believe lying: that all may be judged who have not believed the truth, but have consented to iniquity."—Neither do I tell you—i.e., you are not able to hear from me who I am, since you do not even receive the witness who came to bear testimony of me. St. Matthew here adds the parable of the two sons, introduced very tellingly by our Lord with the words: "But what think you?" It is one of the parables that speaks of the rejection of the Jews by reason of their rejection of our Lord, concluding with the awful words: "Amen I say to you, that the publicans and the harlots shall go into the Kingdom of God before you," and bringing in again at its conclusion St. John the Baptist and their refusal to accept his message and warning (Mt. xxi. 28-32).

CHAPTER XII

THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN—THE QUESTION CONCERNING TRIBUTE TO CAESAR (ASKED BY THE PHARISEES)—THE QUESTION CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION (ASKED BY THE SADDUCEES)—THE QUESTION CONCERNING THE FIRST COMMANDMENT (ASKED BY THE SCRIBES)—THE QUESTION CONCERNING THE SON OF DAVID (ASKED BY OUR LORD)—THE WIDOW'S MITE

AND he began to speak to them in parables: A certain **1** man planted a vineyard and made a hedge about it, and dug a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

1. In parables. This parable is also in Mt. (xxi.) and Lk. (xx.). Mt. adds the parables of the two sons, and of the marriage of the king's son.—**A vineyard.** The vineyard was the recognized symbol of Israel itself, so that it was impossible for members of the Sanhedrim, or for the better taught among the crowd, to mistake the drift of this parable. From the outset they knew well that our Lord "spoke this parable against them" (verse 12). Cp. Jer. ii. 21: "Yet I planted thee a chosen vineyard, all true seed: how then art thou turned unto me into that which is good for nothing, O strange vineyard?" Cp. Ps. lxxix. 15, 16: "Turn again, O God of hosts, look down from heaven, and see, and visit this vineyard, and perfect the same which thy right hand hath planted."—**Planted.** The word indicates both thought and care. God planted his spiritual vineyard under Moses, when "he alone was their leader, and set them upon high land, that they might eat the fruits of the fields, and suck honey out of the rocks, and oil out of the hardest stone" (Deut. xxxii. 13, 14); so, too, under Josue, when the Jews were established in the Land of Promise. The parable is almost a quotation from Is. v. 1-7: "My beloved had a vineyard on a hill in a fruitful place. And he fenced it in, and picked the stones out of it, and planted it with the choicest vines, and built a tower in the midst thereof, and set up a winepress therein; and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and ye men of Juda, judge between me and my vineyard. What is there that I ought to do more to my vineyard, that I have not done to it? Was it that I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it

- 2 And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant to receive of the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.

hath brought forth wild grapes? And now I will show you what I will do to my vineyard. I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be wasted: I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down. And I will make it desolate; it shall not be pruned, and it shall not be digged; but briars and thorns shall come up: and I will command the clouds to rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel; and the man of Juda his pleasant plant: and I looked that he should do judgment, and behold iniquity: and do justice, and behold a cry."—**A hedge**—"a wall," of loose stones, to protect the vineyard against invaders, such as boars, jackals, and foxes. Cp. Ps. lxxix. 13: "Why hast thou broken down the hedge thereof, so that all they who pass by the way do pluck it? The boar out of the wood hath laid it waste, and a singular wild beast hath devoured it." "Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines" (Cant. ii. 15). "Enclosures of loose stone, like the walls of fields in Derbyshire and Westmoreland, everywhere catch the eye on the bare slopes of Hebron, of Bethlehem, and of Olivet."—**The winevat**. The winepress consisted of two parts: (1) the upper trough, in which the grapes were placed, and there trodden by the feet of several persons, often amidst singing and other expressions of joy; (2) a smaller trough, into which the expressed juice flowed through a hole or spout. Here the smaller trough, which was often hollowed out of the earth or native rock and then lined with masonry, is put for the whole apparatus, and is called the winevat. (Vat=fat, from Anglo-Saxon fact=a vessel.)—**A tower**—i.e., a tower for the watchman. Here the watchers and vine-dressers lived, and frequently, with slings, scared away wild animals and robbers.—**And let it to husbandmen**. By "husbandmen" are meant the spiritual rulers and guides of the Jews. Ezechiel calls them "the shepherds of Israel." "Woe to the shepherds of Israel, that fed themselves! Should not the flocks be fed by the shepherds? You eat the milk, and you clothed yourselves with the wool, and you killed that which was fat: but my flock you did not feed. The weak you have not strengthened, and that which was sick you have not healed; that which was broken you have not bound up, and that which was driven away you have not brought again, neither have you sought that which was lost; but you ruled over them with rigour and with a high hand. And my sheep were scattered because there was no shepherd, and they became the prey of all the beasts of the field, and were scattered" (Ezech. xxxiv. 2-5).—**Into a far country**. Lk. adds: "for a long time."

2. **A servant**. "In Mt. *groups* of servants are sent *twice*; in Mk. each servant receives a separate mission, and there are *many* such; in Lk. each servant is sent separately, but he *stops*

Who having laid hands on him, beat him, and sent 3 him away empty.

And again he sent to them another servant; and him 4 they wounded in the head, and used him reproachfully.

And again he sent another, and him they killed: and 5 many others, of whom some they beat, and others they killed.

Therefore having yet one son, most dear to him: he 6 also sent him unto them last of all, saying: They will reverence my son.

But the husbandmen said one to another: This is the 7 heir; come let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.

at the *third*. The groups in Mt. may be taken to represent successive periods of prophetic life and energy, whilst the reference to individuals in Mk. and Lk. accentuates the distinctness of the message entrusted to each prophet."

3. Beat him. Lit. "flayed him." The *growth* of the outrages is clearly marked in verses 3, 4, and 5. Mk. is, as usual, more full of detail and varied than either Mt. or Lk. The detail "wounded him in the head" is peculiar to Mk.

5. And many others—*i.e.*, they maltreated. Cp. St. Stephen's scathing denunciation of the Jews (Acts vii. 51, 52): "you stiff-necked and uncircumcized in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do you also. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?" (Cp. 1 Thess. ii. 15; Heb. xi. 36-40; Apoc. xvi. 6.)

6. The different narratives of this point of the parable should be carefully noted:

Mt. has: "and *last of all* he sent to them his son, saying, They will reverence my son."

Mk. has: "Having therefore, *as yet*, one dearly beloved son (or "one son, much beloved") he sent him also to them, *last of all*, saying: They will reverence my son."

Lk. has: "Then the Lord of the vineyard said: What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. It *may* be, *when they see him*, they will reverence him."

For the telling and important phrase "last of all," cp. St. Paul, Heb. i. 1, 2: "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, *last of all*, in these days hath spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world."—**Reverence**—"they will turn themselves towards" him, in contrition and in a spirit of obedience. The Greek word is the same in all three Synoptists. For the love of the Eternal Father for his only Son, cp. Mt. iii. 17; Mk. i. 11; Lk. iii. 22.

7. This is the heir. Cp. Heb. iii. 5, 6. The "fulness of time

- 8 And laying hold on him, they killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.
- 9 What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy those husbandmen; and will give the vineyard to others.
- 10 And have you not read this scripture: The stone which the builders rejected, the same is made the head of the corner:
- 11 By the Lord has this been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes.

has come," and our Lord "at the end of ages hath appeared for the destruction of sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. ix. 26). Cp. Rom. viii. 17; Gal. iii. 29.—**Come, let us kill him.** These were the exact words of the brethren of Joseph at Dothain (Gen. xxxvii. 20). Cp. Jn. xi. 47-53.—**The inheritance shall be ours.** We have in this phrase a perfect exposition of the spirit of Jewish exclusiveness.

8. **They killed him.** Cp. Acts ii. 23; iii. 15; 1 Thess. ii. 15. In Mt. and Lk. the order of events is reversed, the Son being first cast out of the vineyard and then killed. Cp. the stoning of Naboth (3 Kings xxi. 13): "wherefore they brought Naboth forth without the city, and stoned him to death." (Cp. Heb. xiii. 12, 13; Jn. xix. 17.)

9. **What will the lord of the vineyard do?** In Mt. the answer to this question is put into the mouth of the *audience*; in Lk. as in Mk., our Lord answers his own question; while certain voices around exclaim: "God forbid."—**And will give the vineyard to others**—*i.e.*, the Jews will be rejected, the Gentiles will be called. The words "to others" contain the whole point and sting of the parable. As our Lord so strongly put it, according to Mt.: "Therefore I say to you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof." Cp. Mt. viii. 11, 12; and read carefully Rom. xi. 17-25.

10. **Read this scripture**—"read even this scripture." The passage of Scripture referred to was Ps. cxvii. 22, 23, portions of which had just been sung in the procession of palms. All recognized this Psalm as referring to the Messias. The application of these words by our Lord to himself deeply impressed the Apostles, who used them in their discourses more than once after Pentecost. (Cp. Acts iv. 11; 1 Pet. ii. 4, 7; 1 Cor. iii. 9, 10.) The imagery of the vineyard has been changed to that of a building, the "head of the corner" being a large stone placed at a corner in such a way as to bind together the two outer walls. Cp. Is. xxviii. 16: "Behold, I will lay a stone in the foundations of Sion, a tried stone, a corner stone, a precious stone, founded in the foundation." (Cp. Rom. ix. 32, 33; Eph. ii. 20-22.)

11. **By the Lord has this been done.** Lk. omits these words,

And they sought to lay hands on him, but they feared **12** the people, for they knew that he spoke this parable to them. And leaving him, they went their way.

And they sent to him some of the Pharisees, and of the **13** Herodians, that they should catch him in his words.

Who coming, say to him: Master, we know that thou **14** art a true speaker, and carest not for any man; for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or shall we not give it?

while Mk. omits the striking conclusion to the whole incident which is given by both Mt. (xxi. 44) and Lk. (xx. 18). Cp. Acts iii. 13.

12. They sought to lay hands on him. St. Mark vividly depicts the *growing* hatred of our Lord by the Jews, and their longing to kill him, during the early days of Holy Week.—Leaving him, they went their way—only in Mk.

13. And they sent to him. They felt bound apparently to make yet another attempt against our Lord, and as the question concerns a matter of state interest, the Pharisees associate the Herodians with themselves. Lk. is even more pictorial. "And being upon the watch, they sent spies, who should feign themselves just, that they might take hold of him in his words" (xx. 20). Cp. Mt. xxii. 15. The Greek word for "catch" contains the figure of a hunter with his net or snare.

14. Master—"Teacher."—A true speaker. Truth is the chief feature of our Lord's mission to the world. This is especially drawn out in St. John's Gospel. "The law was given by Moses: grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (Jn. i. 17). "For this was I born," said our Lord to Pilate, "and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth. Everyone that is of the truth, heareth my voice" (Jn. xviii. 37). I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (Jn. xiv. 6). Nicodemus used almost identical language to our Lord when he went to him by night (Jn. iii. 2).—Thou regardest not the person of men. "Man seeth those things that appear, but the Lord beholdeth the heart" (1 Kings xvi. 7). Cp. Acts x. 34; Rom. ii. 11; Eph. vi. 9; Col. iii. 25.—In truth. Again they harp ironically on this feature in our Lord's life and teaching. For the phrase "the way of God," cp. Mt. vii. 13, 14. In the Acts "the way" is used as synonymous with the Christian profession. Cp. Acts ix. 2; xix. 9, 23; xxiv. 22.—To give tribute. The allusion is to the capitation or poll-tax, levied by the Roman Government. The payment of it was objectionable, both as a sign of subjection to a foreign power, and because of the Emperor's effigy being stamped on the silver *denarius*, in which the money had to be paid. (Cp. Acts v. 37.) Another and a fuller reading here

- 15 Who knowing their wiliness, saith to them: Why tempt you me? bring me a penny that I may see it.
- 16 And they brought it him. And he saith to them: Whose is this image and inscription? They say to him, Caesar's.
- 17 And Jesus answering said to them: Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.
- 18 And there came to him the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying:

gives the translation: "is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not? Shall we give it, or shall we not give it?"

15. **Knowing their wiliness**—"seeing their hypocrisy." Mt. has: "knowing their wickedness"; Lk. has: "discerning clearly their cunning." Whatever answer our Lord might give would involve him in difficulty. If he declared it to *be* lawful to pay such tribute, they would accuse him to the people, as one who favoured their state of servitude: if he said it was *not* lawful to pay it, they would accuse him as one who was stirring up the people against Caesar—a charge which they actually *did* make against him within the next three days! (Cp. Lk. xxiii. 2.) —**Bring me a penny, that I may see it.** This is far more dramatic than either Mt. or Lk., who simply have: "Show me the coin of the tribute," as though they had one ready in their hands. But a *denarius*, with its heathen symbols, was *not* likely to be ready at hand, since only Jewish coins were current in the Temple. No, they must go and *fetch* one for our Lord to see, and St. Mark's pointed word "bring" helps us to realize the pause, the interest excited by the production of the coin, and the breathless silence and suspense while all waited for the momentous reply. Mt. and Lk. have passed over this telling feature in the story.

16. **And they brought it**—"they had one brought." The Greek verb here is different to the one translated "bring" in verse 15, and implies that the Pharisees made some money-changer bring the coin of the tribute, for they themselves would not defile their fingers by touching such a thing, unnecessarily at any rate.—**They say to him.** This time at any rate they could not say: "We know not." (Cp. xi. 33.)

17. **Render**—"pay as being due." For the sentiment of our Lord's wondrous and most brief reply, cp. Rom. xiii. 7; 1 Pet. ii. 13-15.—**They marvelled.** The Greek word is very strong, and occurs only here in N.T. Lk. adds: "they held their peace."

18. **There came**—"there come"—a vivid present.—**The Sadducees.** This is the first mention of them in Mk. They were mainly to be found in Jerusalem and their adherents were relatively "few, rich, and dignified," and did not share the

Master, Moses wrote unto us, that if any man's brother 19 die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed to his brother.

Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a 20 wife, and died leaving no issue.

And the second took her, and died: and neither did he 21 leave any issue. And the third in like manner.

And the seven all took her in like manner; and did not 22 leave issue. Last of all the woman also died.

In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise 23 again, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife.

And Jesus answering, saith to them: Do ye not there- 24 fore err, because you know not the scriptures, nor the power of God?

popular esteem of the Pharisees. (See Appendix, 1.) Cp. Mt. xxii. 23; Lk. xx. 27.—**Who say there is no resurrection.** Cp. Acts xxiii. 8. The purpose of their visit and question was certainly hostile. The dilemma raised by the Pharisees had aimed at the death of our Lord, while that of the Sadducees aimed at making him ridiculous.

19. Master—"Teacher."—Moses wrote unto us—"prescribed for us." The Law in question is given in Deut. xxv. 5, and was called the Law of the Levirate, from "Levir," which means "brother-in-law." The real object of the institution was to prevent a family inheritance from being broken up. The first child of the second marriage was accounted to be (legally) the child of the previous husband. "And the first son he shall have of her, he shall call by his name (*i.e.*, the name of the deceased first husband) that his name be not abolished out of Israel." (Cp. Gen. xxxviii. 8.) It is most probable that the Sadducees had put this difficulty to Pharisees and Scribes and others more than once already, without obtaining any satisfactory answer, for, when our Lord answered them fully on this occasion, they exclaimed, as Lk. (xx. 39) tells us: "Master, thou hast said well"—a measure of praise which they certainly would not have afforded to our Lord had their difficulty been sufficiently cleared up previously.

20. There were seven brethren. In the Greek the numeral stands first, and is emphatic by position: "Seven brethren there were."

21. Omit the words: "in like manner."

22. Omit the words: "took her."

24. Do ye not therefore err—"is not this the reason why ye err, that ye know not?" Mt. has a direct "you err," but the

- 25 For when they shall rise again from the dead, they shall neither marry, nor be married, but are as the angels in heaven.
- 26 And as concerning the dead that they rise again, have you not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spoke to him, saying: I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Jacob?
- 27 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You therefore do greatly err.
- 28 And there came one of the scribes that had heard them reasoning together, and seeing that he had answered them well, asked him which was the first commandment of all.

question as given in Mk. is characteristic of our Lord's manner. His question has all the force of a strong assertion. To them might be applied the words of St. Paul: "Some have not the knowledge of God, I speak it to your shame" (1 Cor. xv. 34).

25. As the angels in heaven. Lk. (xx. 36) is more full: "neither can they die any more, for they are equal to the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

26. That they rise again. Cp. 1 Cor. xv. 35-49.—In the book of Moses. They had quoted Moses as their authority to our Lord: He in turn refutes them by one of the Books of Moses: Exod. iii. 6.

27. But of the living. Lk. adds: "for all live to him." The root of the denial of the resurrection on the part of the Sadducees was the death of the soul simultaneously with that of the body. By showing the falsity of this tenet, our Lord convinced them of the resurrection. How closely connected in the Jewish mind was the immortality of the soul with the resurrection, may be gathered from 2 Mach. xii. 42-46.—You therefore do greatly err. This conclusion is found only in St. Mark.

28. Seeing that he had answered them well. Lk. gives no record of this question put to our Lord, while Mt. (xxii. 34) gives a different colouring to the scene. He says, "the Pharisees hearing that he had silenced the Sadducees, came together: and one of them, a doctor of the law, asked him, tempting him," etc. Clearly he had been sent to test our Lord with no good feeling towards him: but, after hearing our Lord's refutation of the Sadducees, his whole attitude was changed (and what more likely), and "he was filled with admiration" for our Lord. He was glad to ask his question, but he asked it in quite a different spirit to that in which he had intended so to do.—The first—*i.e.*, "the most important."

And Jesus answered him: The first commandment of 29
all is, Hear, O Israel: the Lord thy God is one God.

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole 30
heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind,
and with thy whole strength. This is the first command-
ment.

And the second is like to it: Thou shalt love thy neigh- 31
bour as thyself. There is no other commandment
greater than these.

And the scribe said to him: Well, Master, thou hast 32
said in truth, that there is one God, and there is no other
besides him.

29. Of all. These words are only in Mk., and imply from our Lord a strong censure of the importance attached by the Pharisees to mere external observances, while they neglected "the weightier things of the law, judgment, and mercy, and faith. These things they ought to have done, and not to leave those undone" (Mt. xxiii. 23).—Hear, O Israel. The words are a quotation from Deut. vi. 4, 5. They are an introduction to the actual commandment, and are omitted by Mt. The words were recited daily by every Jew, and were written on the small roll which the Scribe would carry in his phylactery.

30. With thy whole mind. Cp. Rom. viii. 38, 39; 1 Pet. i. 13; 2 Pet. iii. 1.

31. And the second. Our Lord had not been asked for any second commandment, but he states it here in order to complete his summary of human duty, and to enthrone the law of fraternal charity aright, as being "like to" the first law of love. The quotation is from Lev. xix. 18, and the passage is quoted also in James ii. 8; Rom. xiii. 9; Gal. v. 14.—Like to it. These words really belong to Mt. xxii. 39, and have crept in here. The best MSS. omit them. (Cp. 1 Jn. iv. 20, 21.)—As thyself. Cp. Lk. vi. 31; Rom. xiii. 9, 10; 1 Cor. xiii. 4-8; Gal. v. 14.—There is no other commandment greater than these. Mt. has: "On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets." "The variation is interesting, as pointing to the different purpose and spirit of the two Gospels. St. Matthew, writing for Jews, and surveying the *past*, brings out the two commandments of love as the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets of old. St. Mark writing for Gentiles, 'who know not the Law,' and looking to the *future*, records only our Lord's commendation of them."

32. This verse, and verses 33 and 34 are peculiar to Mk.—Well, Master. The good disposition of the Scribe stands out in every word of his reply to our Lord. How different to the conduct of the Pharisees and Scribes in the two preceding questions! They merely "held their peace," and "went their way." This

- 33 And that he should be loved with the whole heart, and with the whole understanding, and with the whole soul, and with the whole strength; and to love one's neighbour as one's self, is a greater thing than all holocausts and sacrifices.
- 34 And Jesus seeing that he had answered wisely, said to him: Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.
- 35 And Jesus answering said, teaching in the temple: How do the scribes say, that Christ is the Son of David?

man "from a very good heart" declares that our Lord has spoken well.—**Well, Master**—"Nobly said, O Teacher."—**There is no other besides him.** This is an O.T. phrase of frequent occurrence. Cp. Is. xlv. 21: "Who hath declared this from the beginning? Have not I the Lord, and there is no God else besides me? A just God and a Saviour, there is none besides me: be converted to me, and you shall be saved, for I am God, and there is no other."

33. **A greater thing**—"far greater thing." The words are based on the famous reply of Samuel to Saul on the occasion of his disobedience with regard to Agag, King of Amalec, and his spoils: "Doth the Lord desire holocausts and victims and not rather that the voice of the Lord should be obeyed? For obedience is better than sacrifices, and to hearken rather than to offer the fat of rams" (1 Kings xv. 22). Cp. Osee vi. 6: "I desired mercy and not sacrifice: and the knowledge of God more than holocausts."

34. **Wisely**—"thoughtfully." The Greek word occurs nowhere else in N.T.—**Thou art not far.** More than once this very phrase is used in N.T. of the Gentiles. "For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are far off, whomsoever the Lord our God shall call" (Acts ii. 39). Cp. Eph. ii. 13, 17.—**Durst ask him**—i.e., in that captious and insolent spirit. (Cp. Jn. xxi. 12.)

35. **And Jesus answering.** The question now asked was a final answer to all opponents. According to Mt. (xxii. 41) it was asked in the presence of the Pharisees, and was addressed to them. It is also recorded by Lk. (xx. 41). Even as at his first entrance into the Temple, at the opening of his Public Life, our Lord had shown himself the Lord of the Temple, by ejecting "the changers of money" and "the sellers of oxen, sheep, and doves" (Jn. ii. 14), so now, with his last words before leaving the Temple, never more to return to it, he speaks of the dignity of the Messiah, shows up the wickedness of those who ought to have been zealous for the glory of the Temple, and, by means of the poor widow, manifests the spirit of his new kingdom, and asserts the measure by which the worth of our deeds is prized by God.—

For David himself saith by the Holy Ghost: The Lord ³⁶ said to my Lord, Sit on my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool.

David therefore himself calleth him Lord, and whence ³⁷ is he then his son? And a great multitude heard him gladly.

And he said to them in his doctrine: Beware of the ³⁸ scribes, who love to walk in long robes, and to be saluted in the market-place.

That Christ—"that the Christ." (Cp. Jn. vii. 42.) The inference was drawn from such passages as: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root" (Is. xi. 1). "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, and I will raise up to David a just branch: and a king shall reign and shall be wise: and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth" (Jer. xxiii. 5). "And thou, Bethlehem, art a little one among the thousands of Juda; out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel: and his going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity" (Mich. v. 2).

36. The Lord said to my Lord. The reference is to Ps. cix. 1, which the Scribes themselves recognized to be Messianic, and which is more frequently cited or alluded to by Apostolic writers than any other context from the O.T. (Cp. Acts ii. 34; 1 Cor. xv. 25; Heb. i. 13; 1 Pet. iii. 22; Apoc. iii. 21.)

37. Whence is he then his son? The Jews were possessed with the notion that the Messiah was the son of David in the sense that, like David, he would build up a temporal kingdom and subject many to his rule. Such was their hope: and our Lord would fain drive this thought from their minds as false and repugnant to Scripture. (Cp. Is. ix. 6, 7; Rom. i. 3, 4.) St. Matthew says: "no man was able to answer him a word." To us the answer is plain. Our Lord was the son and heir of David by earthly descent, but in virtue of his divine nature, he was David's Lord.—**And a great multitude heard him gladly.** Peculiar to Mk. "Grace is poured abroad in thy lips" (Ps. xlv. 37). Cp. vi. 20.

38. In his doctrine—i.e., in the course of his discourse, for what is contained in this and the two following verses is a mere fragment. It is recorded at great length by Mt. (xxiii. 1-39) in a passage that, for severity on the part of our Lord, has no equal. (Cp. Lk. xx. 44-47.) Yet St. Mark, in his short summary, makes our Lord expose the three main vices of those who should have been the guardians and upholders of the sanctity of the Temple—viz., pride, avarice, and hypocrisy.—**In long robes.** The Greek word is used in N.T. specially of priestly robes, or of robes worn on festal occasions. (Cp. Lk. xv. 22; Apoc. vii. 9.)—**To be saluted.** Mt. adds: "and to be called by men, Rabbi."

- 39 And to sit in the first chairs, in the synagogues, and to have the highest places at suppers:
- 40 Who devour the houses of widows under the pretence of long prayer: these shall receive greater judgment.
- 41 And Jesus sitting over against the treasury, beheld how the people cast money into the treasury, and many that were rich cast in much.
- 42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing.

39. In the first chairs—*i.e.*, on the bench in front of the Ark in the synagogue, and facing the congregation, which was reserved for officials and persons of distinction.—The highest places. Cp. Lk. xiv. 7.—At suppers. Guests were entertained either at breakfast (Mt. xxii. 4; Lk. xi. 38; xiv. 12), or at supper, but chiefly at the latter (vi. 21; Lk. xiv. 16; Jn. xii. 2).

40. Devour the houses of widows—*i.e.*, as guardians and administrators of their property. The practice was specially forbidden in the Law. Cp. Exod. xxii. 22: "You shall not hurt a widow or an orphan." For our Lord's teaching on prayer, read Mt. vi. 5-13.

41. The incident of the widow's mite is also recorded by Lk. (xxi. 1-4), but with far less detail than in Mk.—Sitting over against the treasury—as though resting after the warfare of this "Day of Questions." Our Lord had passed from the Court of the Gentiles, where he had been teaching, into the Court of the Women. We are reminded by this detail, which is peculiar to Mk., of the verse in St. John (iv. 6): "Jesus, therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well."—The treasury. This treasury consisted of thirteen brazen chests, called "trumpets," because the mouths through which the money was cast into the chest, were wide at the top and narrow below. They stood in the Court of the Women. Nine chests were for the appointed temple-tribute and for the sacrifice-tribute—that is, money-gifts instead of the sacrifices; four chests for free-will offerings, for incense, temple-decoration, and burnt-offerings. (Cp. Jn. viii. 20.)—Beheld—"was beholding"—*i.e.*, watching. The Greek verb implies a looking-on with keen interest—stronger by far than Lk.'s "saw."—How the people cast money. Before the Passover, large free-will offerings in addition to the temple-tax were generally made. Lk. mentions three classes—the people, the rich, and the widow.—Cast—"are casting"—a vivid present. Our Lord watched them, one by one.

42. A certain—"one," with perhaps an allusion to her solitary life, and also in contrast with the "many."—Poor—"very poor," in contrast with "the rich."—Two mites. Mite is a contraction of *minute*. The *lepton* here mentioned (Lk. calls them "brass mites") was the very smallest copper coin. Two

And calling his disciples together, he saith to them: 43
Amen I say to you, this poor widow hath cast in more
than all they who have cast into the treasury.

For all they did cast in of their abundance, but she of 44
her want cast in all she had, even her whole living.

CHAPTER XIII

OUR LORD FORETELLS THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM—
OUR LORD SPEAKS OF HIS SECOND COMING AT THE
END OF THE WORLD—OUR LORD GIVES A FINAL
EXHORTATION TO WATCHFULNESS

AND as he was going out of the temple, one of his 1
disciples said to him: Master, behold what manner of
stones, and what buildings are here.

of them made one Roman *quadrans*, which was the eighth part
of an *as*, or the $\frac{1}{16}$ th part of a *denarius*. The *lepton* was a Greek
coin. In the word "two" there is much beauty and point. The
widow's last farthing was in *two* coins, and she parted with *both*.
—Which make a farthing—peculiar to Mk., who thus
explains the coins for his Roman readers.

43. And calling his disciples together—peculiar to Mk. The
lesson was too striking and important for them to miss it.
They must not merely *hear* of it later on: they must *see* it, and
receive an object lesson. "Do not despise one of these, my
little ones." "God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. ix. 7).—
Amen I say to you—much stronger than Lk.'s "Verily."—
This poor widow—"this widow—this poor widow," our Lord
thus emphasizing her poverty. (Cp. 2 Cor. viii. 12-14.)—
More than all they. The "more" is emphatic: so, too, the
"all."

44. All she had, even her whole living—more full and emphatic
than Lk.'s: "all the living that she had." We should here
insert the events and words recorded by Jn. xii. 20-36. Our
Lord now prepared to leave the Temple, which he was never again
to enter. His public work was over, his last counsels and final
warnings to the Jews had been delivered; "his hour" had now
come.

1. As he was going out—for the last time, on the evening of
the Tuesday in Holy Week.—One of his disciples—perhaps
St. Peter. Mt. has "the disciples" less vividly.—Master=

- 2 And Jesus answering, said to him: Seest thou all these great buildings? There shall not be left a stone upon a stone, that shall not be thrown down.
- 3 And as he sat on the mount of Olivet over against the Temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him apart:
- 4 Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall

Teacher.—**What manner of stones.** Our Lord, as he wept over Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, had said: "they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation" (Lk. xix. 43). These words had naturally clung to the minds of the disciples, and now, as they gaze at the glorious buildings, they cry out in distress, and almost as a protest, that such a fate should be in store for them. Surely, at least, *these* stones will be spared. Josephus, the historian, tells us that these stones were of strong white marble, each forty-five feet long, eight feet high, and twelve feet broad. Even the foundations were of white marble, and the enclosure walls, extending to the end of the surrounding valleys, were of singular strength and magnificence. How glorious and imperishable must they have looked in the light of the evening sun!—**And what buildings.** These formed a succession of terraces, each rising above the other, the sanctuary being the highest of all, and conspicuous in its sheen of white and gold from every side. Lk. (xxi. 5) adds that mention was also made of the "goodly stones and gifts" with which the Temple was "adorned." Yet, less than forty years afterwards, "Sion was ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem became as a heap of stones, and the mountain of the temple as the high places of the forests" (Mich. iii. 12).

2. **That shall not be thrown down.** This was fulfilled by the Romans under Titus, A.D. 71. It is said that he had originally wished to save so fine a monument, but Titus was so enraged with the inhabitants for their obstinate resistance, that he ordered its demolition.

3. **Over against the temple—only in Mk.** The situation would recall the previous conversation on coming out of the Temple. They would have passed over the brook Cedron, and ascended the steep footpath that leads over the Mount of Olives in the direction of Bethany. Very likely the spot was the same as that where our Lord had wept over the city on the previous Sunday.—**Peter and James and John and Andrew.** Mk. alone gives the names of those who now approached our Lord. St. Peter, as usual, is named first. Some have thought from the special mention of St. Andrew here that he was the disciple who put the question to our Lord in verse 1.

4. **Tell us, when.** The question "when?" is one that our Lord never answered. We are to watch, with our lamps trimmed, ready to meet the Bridegroom, for we "know not the day nor

be the sign when all these things shall begin to be fulfilled?

And Jesus answering, began to say to them, Take heed 5
lest any man deceive you.

For many shall come in my name saying, I am he: 6
and they shall deceive many.

And when you shall hear of wars and rumours of 7
wars, fear ye not. For such things must needs be, but
the end is not yet.

For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom 8
against kingdom, and there shall be earthquakes in
divers places, and famines. These things are the be-
ginning of sorrows.

the hour." The question is given more fully by Mt. (xxiv. 3), and embraced three points: (1) the time of the destruction of the Temple; (2) the sign of our Lord's coming; (3) the sign of the end of the world. (Cp. Lk. xxi. 7.) In St. Mark's text, the first "these things" refers to the fate of Jerusalem, the second "these things" to the return of our Lord. The Apostles had heard our Lord refer directly to his second coming more than once before this day (cp. Mt. xvi. 27; xix. 28); moreover, many of his parables spoke strongly of the return of the King to take an account of his servants (cp. Lk. xix. 12-27; Mt. xxii. 2-14); and now, in this time of strain and anxiety, they naturally thought that these two events were going to coincide, and that *then* the day would dawn for the manifestation of their Master's kingdom.

5. And Jesus answering. Our Lord's answer is intentionally obscure, for it was not for them "to know the times or moments which the Father hath put in his own power" (Acts i. 7). The answer falls into three parts: (1) verses 5-13, in which our Lord foretells the *general character* of the period to intervene before his second coming, the trials and persecutions to be faced, and the spirit in which to face them; (2) verses 14-18, in which he speaks of the fall of Jerusalem; (3) verses 19-37, in which he speaks of the last days of the world. Meanwhile we must watch, endure, and pray.

6. Many shall come—*e.g.*, Simon Magus (Acts viii. 9).

7. Wars and rumours of wars. The reference is primarily to the disturbed state of Palestine during the interval between our Lord's Ascension and the fall of Jerusalem. (Cp. Acts v. 36, 37.)—Fear ye not—"do not make an outcry."—The end is not yet—"not yet the end." (Cp. 1 Cor. xv. 24.)

8. Nation against nation. Cp. Is. xix. 2: "They shall fight brother against brother, and friend against friend, city against city, kingdom against kingdom."—Earthquakes and famines.

- 9 But look to yourselves. For they shall deliver you up to councils, and in the synagogues you shall be beaten, and you shall stand before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony unto them.
- 10 And unto all nations the gospel must first be preached.
- 11 And when they shall lead you and deliver you up, be not thoughtful beforehand what you shall speak; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye. For it is not you that speak, but the Holy Ghost.

Cp. Acts xi. 28.—These things are the beginnings of sorrows = “the beginnings of sorrows these.” The word translated “sorrows” here means strictly “birth-pangs.” (Cp. Acts ii. 24, and 1 Thess. v. 3.) Even as the Prophets of old had declared to God’s people that from the shame and anguish of their long exile, which they likened to birth-pangs, a glorious restoration should ensue (cp. Mich. iv. 10), so does our Lord wish to teach us that, by means of these trials meekly borne, a better order of things shall arise, for “they that sow in tears shall reap in joy.” (Cp. Jn. xvi. 21; Rom. viii. 22; James i. 2-4.)

9. But look to yourselves. A sharp phrase, arresting attention, and peculiar to Mk.—Deliver you up to councils. Of the actual hearers of our Lord, some were destined to find this true within little more than fifty days. Thus, in Acts iv. 3, we find all the Apostles brought before the Sanhedrim, and again in Acts v. 18, 27. The words “to councils” would be better rendered “into councils,” with the added idea of being hastily hurried before them.—You shall be beaten. St. Paul alone underwent this punishment eight times. “Of the Jews five times did I receive forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods” (2 Cor. xi. 24). Cp. Acts v. 40; xvi. 23. The scourging was usually inflicted in public.—You shall stand before governors and kings. Thus did St. Paul stand before Felix (Acts xxiv. 10); before Festus (Acts xxv. 1); before Agrippa (Acts xxvi. 1); before Nero (2 Tim. iv. 16).—For my sake. Lk. has: “for my name’s sake.” (Cp. 1 Pet. iv. 16.)

10. The gospel must first be preached. Cp. Lk. xxiv. 47; Rom. iv. 19, 24; Col. i. 6, 23. These words at least declared the spread of the Gospel, and thus would furnish much consolation to the Apostles.

11. They shall lead you—i.e., to the court for trial.—Deliver you up—the word contains the idea of *betrayal*. (Cp. Mt. x. 18-20.)—What you shall speak. Cp. Exod. iv. 10-12: “Moses said: I beseech thee, O Lord, I am not eloquent; and since thou hast spoken to thy servant, I have more impediment and slowness of tongue. The Lord said to him: Who made man’s mouth? or who made the dumb and the deaf, the seeing

And the brother shall betray his brother unto death, **12** and the father his son; and children shall rise up against the parents, and shall work their death.

And you shall be hated by all men for my name's **13** sake. But he that shall endure unto the end, he shall be saved.

And when you shall see the abomination of desolation, **14** standing where it ought not: he that readeth let him understand: then let them that are in Judea, flee unto the mountains:

and the blind? Did not I? Go therefore, and I will be thy mouth, and I will teach thee what thou shalt speak."—**But the Holy Ghost.** In Lk. (xxi. 14, 15) our Lord represents himself as the source of the words to be spoken on such occasions. (Cp. Jn. xiv. 26; xv. 26.)

12. And the brother—*i.e.*, so great will be the hatred of our Lord, that trials and persecutions shall come from within, as well as from without.—**Shall betray.** Our Lord continues to harp upon the idea of betrayal, even as he was so soon to be betrayed by one who had once been a friend.—**And shall work their death.** Cp. Jn. xvi. 2. Later on St. Peter was more distinctly warned of his own death by our Lord. (Cp. Jn. xxi. 18, 19; 2 Pet. i. 14.)

13. You shall be hated—"you shall be being hated," denoting the long *continuance* of the hatred.—**For my name's sake.** Cp. 1 Pet. iv. 14; Jn. xv. 23-25.—**He that shall endure.** So Mt. exactly. Lk. has: "but a hair of your head shall not perish. In your patience you shall possess your souls" (xxi. 18, 19). Cp. 1 Pet. ii. 20; Heb. xii. 1, 7; Apoc. ii. 10; iii. 11, 12.

14. The abomination of desolation. The reference is to the famous prophecy concerning the coming of our Lord in Daniel (ix. 25-27). St. Gabriel has been sent to Daniel, "a man of desires," and "flying swiftly, and touching him at the time of the evening sacrifice," he instructed him as follows: "Know therefore, and take notice, that from the going forth of the word, to build up Jerusalem again, unto Christ the prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks [*i.e.*, weeks of years], and after sixty-two weeks Christ shall be slain, and the people that shall deny him shall not be his. And a people [*i.e.*, the Romans], with their leader [*i.e.*, Titus] that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be waste, and after the end of the war the appointed desolation. And there shall be in the temple the abomination of desolation; and the desolation shall continue even to the end. . . ." St. Luke (xxi. 20) fixes the exact meaning of this phrase, for he says: "When you shall see Jerusalem compassed about with an army, *then* know that the desolation thereof is at hand."—**Standing**

- 15 And let him that is on the housetop, not go down into the house, nor enter therein to take anything out of the house:
- 16 And let him that shall be in the field, not turn back to take up his garment.
- 17 And woe to them that are with child, and that give suck in those days.
- 18 But pray ye, that these things happen not in winter.

where it ought not—*i.e.*, “in the holy place” (Mt. xxiv. 15). Some commentators explain the “abomination of desolation” as referring, in the first instance at any rate, to the profanities and outrages of the Zealots, who held possession of the Temple for some considerable time before the siege of Jerusalem began, thus giving a timely warning to the Christians, that they should effect their escape.—He that readeth, let him understand. Some consider that these words are a kind of note from St. Mark himself, and not the words of our Lord; but this is not likely.—Flee unto the mountains. According to the historian Eusebius, the Christians of Jerusalem were warned before the war broke out by a prophetic revelation to leave the city, and retire to Pella in Peraea, on the east of Jordan, a distance of about 100 miles.

15. The housetop. Men went up to the flat roofs of their houses to sleep, to worship, to watch, to proclaim tidings good and bad, and for many other purposes. So usual a place of resort was the roof, that the Law required it to be fenced with a parapet, as a protection against accidental falls: “When thou buildest a new house, thou shalt make a battlement to the roof round about, lest blood be shed in thy house, and thou be guilty if any one slip, and fall down headlong” (Deut. xxii. 8). The roof was accessible from without by a ladder or staircase. The passage as a whole recalls the escape of Lot from Sodom: “Save thy life: look not back, neither stay thou in all the country about: but save thyself in the mountain, lest thou be also consumed” (Gen. xix. 17).

16. Not turn back—for “these are the days of vengeance,” as Lk. adds (xxi. 22). The man left his coat or outer garment in his house so that he could work in the field with greater ease; but he is not to delay his flight in the hour of this danger, even by the few moments it would take him to go back to the house and fetch the coat. He is to go as he is!

17. Woe to them. The word “woe” occurs in Mk., only here and at xiv. 21; but it is frequent in Mt. and Lk. For the sentiment of the passage, cp. Lk. xxiii. 28-30.

18. In winter. Mt. adds: “nor on the sabbath,” which is passed over by Mk., since he wrote for Gentile readers, to whom the strong Jewish feeling on the subject of Sabbath-day observance would be unintelligible. (Cp. Acts i. 12.)—In

For in those days shall be such tribulations, as were **19** not from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, neither shall be.

And unless the Lord had shortened the days, no flesh **20** should be saved: but for the sake of the elect which he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.

winter—*i.e.*, because of the bad state of the roads and the heavy rains. The slightest hindrance to swift and immediate flight is to be deplored. The encompassing of Jerusalem by the Roman armies took place early in October, A.D. 66, when the weather was still favourable for travelling, and the final siege took place in the still more open months of April or May.

19. In those days. The "in" should be omitted. The Greek gives us: "Those days shall be affliction, the like of which hath not come to pass." The sentence is as harsh as human language can well make it—and intentionally so. "Alas, for that day is great, neither is there the like to it" (Jer. xxx. 7); "the day of the Lord is great and very terrible, and who can stand it?" (Joel ii. 11); "the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light" (Amos v. 18); "the great day of the Lord is near and exceeding swift; that day is a day of wrath, a day of tribulation and distress, a day of calamity and misery" (Sophonias i. 15).—**Such tribulations.** The horrors of the siege of Jerusalem are unparalleled in history. War, sedition, famine, and pestilence combined to enhance its terrible details. The commonest instincts of humanity were forgotten. Every kind feeling became extinct through the all-absorbing want. The besieged devoured even the filth of the streets, and so excessive was the stench that it was necessary to hurl 600,000 corpses over the wall, while 97,000 captives were taken during the war, and more than 1,100,000 perished in the siege. (Read Milman, "History of the Jews," vol. ii. ch. xvi.). Cp. Deut. xxviii. 52: "Thou shalt be besieged within thy gates in all thy land which the Lord thy God will give thee: and thou shalt eat the fruit of thy womb, and the flesh of thy sons and daughters, which the Lord thy God shall give thee, in the distress and extremity wherewith thy enemy shall oppress thee." Cp. Jer. xix. 8: "I will make this city an astonishment and a hissing: everyone that shall pass by it, shall be astonished, and shall hiss because of all the plagues thereof. And I will feed them with the flesh of their sons and with the flesh of their daughters: and they shall eat everyone the flesh of his friend in the siege, and in the distress wherewith their enemies and they that seek their lives shall straiten them."

20. The Lord had shortened. Mt. has: "unless those days had been shortened." The Greek word for "shortened" occurs only here and in the parallel passage in Mt. (xxiv. 22). The metaphor is that of the amputation of a limb.—**No flesh—*i.e.*, no men.** The phrase is a Hebraism. (Cp. Rom. iii. 20; Gal. ii.

- 21** And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ: lo, he is here: do not believe.
- 22** For there will rise up false Christs and false prophets, and they shall show signs and wonders, to seduce (if it were possible) even the elect.
- 23** Take you heed therefore: behold I have foretold you all things.
- 24** But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.

16.)—Which he hath chosen—peculiar to Mk.—He hath shortened. This “shortening” was effected under the hand of God, “partly by the swift and energetic measures of the invading armies, partly by the infatuation of the besieged. Titus encircled Jerusalem with a wall five miles in extent, and fortified it with thirteen strong garrisons in the almost incredibly short space of three days; on the other hand, the leaders of the factions within slew the men who would have taught them how the siege might be prolonged, burnt the corn which would have enabled them to hold out against the enemy, and abandoned the towers which were in reality impregnable. Thus the city was taken in less than five months.”

21. Lo, here is Christ. The alarming reports of the siege of Jerusalem which would reach the refugees at Pella and other places might make them the more ready to believe in the urgency of our Lord’s second Coming.

22. False prophets. Our Lord had long ago warned his disciples against these (cp. Mt. vii. 15), and there had been many such in O.T. times. (Cp. 2 Pet. ii. 1.) St. John also alludes to them (1 Jn. iv. 1). For the “false Christs,” cp. 1 Jn. iv. 3; 2 Jn. 7.—**Signs and wonders.** Cp. 2 Thess. ii. 1-11. A “sign” is something extraordinary regarded as significant of a truth beyond itself: a “wonder” is an occurrence regarded merely as something extraordinary.—**To seduce**—“with a view to misleading.”

23. All things—*i.e.*, all and sufficient to create responsibility and to supply practical guidance, but not sufficient to gratify curiosity.

24. In those days. Our Lord now passes on to the signs immediately preceding and heralding his second Coming. Such signs will be in the form of fearful physical convulsions. We need not suppose the sun and moon will be changed in themselves, or the stars fall from heaven, but at most that they will appear to do so. The great passage in St. Luke (xxi. 25, 26) should be remembered in this connection. “There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves; men withering away for fear, and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world.” Similar

And the stars of heaven shall be falling down, and the **25** powers that are in heaven, shall be moved.

And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the **26** clouds, with great power and glory.

portents are connected with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, as declared by St. Peter, quoting the Prophet Joel. (Cp. Acts ii. 17.) Read 2 Pet. iii. 1-13, and Apoc. xx. and xxi. Our Lord gives no definite note of time as to when these things shall be, beyond indicating that the destruction of Jerusalem shall precede his second Coming. To him "a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years" (2 Pet. iii. 8). Mt. (xxiv. 29) adds the word "immediately," while Lk. (xxi. 25) has no note of time at all.

25. Shall be falling down—more vivid and precise, as usual, than Mt.'s "shall fall." (Cp. 2 Pet. iii. 12, 13.) The picture is of individual stars falling at various times. (Cp. Apoc. vi. 13; viii. 10; ix. 1.)—**The powers that are in heaven**—*i.e.*, the stars. Some, however, refer the phrase to the Angels, but these are specially mentioned in verse 27. The description is full of imagery derived from the O.T., in which the downfall of nations hostile to Israel is spoken of. Cp. Is. xiii. 9, 10: "Behold the day of the Lord shall come, a cruel day, and full of indignation, and of wrath and fury, to lay the land desolate, and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven, and their brightness shall not display their light: the sun shall be darkened in his rising, and the moon shall not shine with her light." Cp. Is. xxxiv. 4: "All the hosts of the heavens shall pine away, and the heavens shall be folded together as a book: and all their host shall fall down as the leaf falleth from the vine and from the fig-tree."—**Shall be moved**. The Greek word is frequently used of the disturbances caused by earthquakes. (Cp. Heb. xii. 26.)

26. And then shall they see the Son of man. The reference is to the famous vision recorded in Daniel vii. 13, the passage in which the name "Son of man" first appears. "I beheld therefore in the vision of the night, and lo, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and he came even to the Ancient of days, and they presented him before him, and he gave him power and glory, and a kingdom: and all peoples, tribes and tongues, shall serve him: his power is an everlasting power that shall not be taken away: and his kingdom shall not be destroyed." (Cp. Apoc. i. 7; xiv. 14; Jn. v. 22, 27.) They shall see our Lord coming "with great power and glory," to whom they would not hearken when he came in humility and poverty. The coming of Almighty God "in the clouds" is the picture with which we are rendered familiar by many passages in the O.T., especially in the Psalms. Cp. "he ascended upon the cherubim, and he flew upon the wings of the winds" (Ps. xvii. 19). "Clouds and darkness are round about him" (Ps. xcvi. 2); "he

- 27 And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.
- 28 Now of the fig tree learn ye a parable, When the branch thereof is now tender, and the leaves are come forth, you know that summer is very near.
- 29 So you also when you shall see these things come to pass, know ye that it is very nigh, even at the doors.

makes the clouds his chariot, and walks upon the wings of the winds" (Ps. ciii. 3).

27. Shall he send his angels. Mt. adds: "with a great trumpet." Note the assertion of our Lord's divinity contained in these words. (Cp. Heb. i. 6, 7.)—**Gather together.** Cp. 2 Thess. ii. 1. The elect belong to our Lord, so he speaks of them as "his." They are his by the gift of the Father. (Cp. Jn. x. 27; xvii. 6, 10.) Read 1 Thess. iv. 15, 16; 1 Cor. xv. 51-58.—**From the four winds.** The phrase is borrowed from Zacharias (ii. 6): "O flee ye out of the land of the north, for I have scattered you unto the four winds of heaven, saith the Lord." (Cp. Apoc. vii. 1.)—**From the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven—i.e.,** from one extreme of the earth's surface to the other, where the extreme of the sky touches it again, the earth being represented, according to the conceptions of those days, as a flat surface. (Cp. 1 Thess. iv. 15, 16; 1 Cor. xv. 51-53.)

28. A parable—"its parable." They had already learnt one lesson from a fig-tree (xi. 13); they were now to learn another. (Cp. Mt. xxiv. 32; Lk. xxi. 29.) Our Lord points to three things in this parable: (1) that the time between his first and second Coming is comparatively short, for "with him a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day"; (2) that his second Coming is as certain to follow these signs as the summer surely follows the time when the trees put forth their leaves; (3) that at length summer will come: the long winter of trial will surely pass, and all things have a glorious consummation.—**Tender—i.e.,** when the branch becomes tender by the softening of the external coverings of the stem, growing succulent under the moisture and sunshine of the spring, as the sap flows through them. After that it begins to put forth its leaves. "Winter is now past, the rain is over and gone: the flowers have appeared in our land, the time of pruning is come; the voice of the turtle is heard in our land: the fig-tree hath put forth her green figs: the vines in flower yield their sweet smell" (Cant. ii. 11-13).

29. Know ye that it is very nigh. The word "it" is very vague. We find the same in Mt., but the sense is more explicit in Lk., who has: "know ye that the kingdom of God is at hand." For the phrase "at the doors," cp. James v. 9.

Amen, I say to you, that this generation shall not pass, 30
until all these things shall be done.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall 31
not pass away.

30. This generation. This difficult saying is given in nearly identical words by all three Synoptists, and it is not easy to be certain of its true meaning. Some would apply the phrase "this generation" in its natural sense to the Jews of that day, some of whom would live to see the destruction of Jerusalem. But it is perhaps best to take the words as spoken by our Lord of the Jewish people regarded as one moral whole, with a great past, and with a future—a future that shall end only with the end of all things. The Jews of our Lord's day were, so to speak, identical with those that came out of Egypt, wandered through the desert, and entered the Land of Promise. Through centuries they were preserved, and prepared to welcome the Messias, when in the fulness of time he should come. "He has now come unto his own, and his own have not received him"; they have cried: "we will not have this man to reign over us"; they have looked even to the future, and desired that "his Blood be upon them and upon their children," thus linking the present with the future; and this rejection shall leave its mark upon them, and colour every day of their history to the end, for "they shall not pass away." No, they shall endure to the end: "blindness in part has happened in Israel," says St. Paul (Rom. xi. 25), "until the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in." Yet "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance": the Jews are still God's chosen people, though the Gentiles, too, have been called into the inheritance, and "have obtained mercy through their (the Jews') unbelief." Yes, "there shall come out of Sion he that shall deliver, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: and this is to them my covenant, when I shall take away their sins: and so all Israel should be saved" (Rom. xi. 25-32). For "the Jews also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in *again*" (Rom. xi. 23).

31. My word shall not pass away. Note again the assertion of divinity here involved. What human teacher ever dared to claim an eternity for his words? Cp. Is. li. 6: "Lift up your eyes to heaven, and look down to the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish like smoke, and the earth shall be worn away like a garment, and the inhabitants thereof shall perish in like manner, but my salvation shall be for ever, and my justice shall not fail." (Cp. Rom. viii. 21; Heb. xii. 25-29; 2 Pet. iii. 10, 13; Apoc. xxi. 1.) "Never did our Lord seem to stand more utterly alone than when he uttered this majestic utterance: never did it seem more improbable that it should be fulfilled. But as we look across the centuries, we see how it has been realized. His words have passed into laws, they have passed

- 32 But of that day or hour no man knoweth, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father.
- 33 Take ye heed, watch and pray. For ye know not when the time is.
- 34 Even as a man going into a far country, left his house; and gave authority to his servants over every work, and commanded the porter to watch.
- 35 Watch ye therefore, for you know not when the lord of the house cometh: at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning.

into doctrines, they have passed into proverbs, they have passed into consolations, but they have never passed away." (Cp. Lk. xvi. 17.)

32. **But of that day.** The word "that" is most emphatic. It refers, of course, to the day of our Lord's second Coming. (Cp. 2 Thess. i. 10; 2 Tim. i. 18.)—**Neither the angels.** Cp. Eph. iii. 10; 1 Pet. i. 12.—**Nor the Son.** Our Lord knew the day and the hour both as God and as man, but it was not among the truths confided to him by his Father to communicate to men. (Cp. Jn. xv. 15; Acts i. 7.) Our Lord spoke in precisely the same sense of himself as he had done to the sons of Zebedee, in Mt. xx. 23, and Mk. x. 40.—**But the Father.** Mt. has: "but the Father alone" (xxiv. 36).

33. **Watch.** The Greek word occurs only four times in N.T., and is far stronger than the word translated "take heed" in verses 5 and 23. It means "keep well awake," "do not permit yourselves to sleep." (Cp. 1 Cor. vii. 29-31; Eph. vi. 18; 1 Thess. v. 6-9; Heb. xiii. 17.)

34. **A man—i.e., our Lord.** The "far country" is heaven, the "home" is the Church of God on earth. (Cp. Heb. iii. 6.) **To his servants—"to his slaves."** The Apostles in their writings glory in the title: "the slave of Jesus Christ." (Cp. Rom. i. 1; Phil. i. 1; James i. 1; Jude 1; Apoc. i. 1.)—**Over every work.** There is no Greek for this. Translate rather "giving to each one his own work."—**The porter—i.e., our Holy Father the Pope.** (Cp. Jn. x. 3.)—**To watch.** The Greek word here used is again different to that used in verses 5, 23, and 33. It is the word used of a shepherd guarding his sheep, and occurs frequently in St. Paul. (Cp. 1 Cor. xvi. 13; Apoc. iii. 2.) The sense is left incomplete. St. Mark thus seems, in fewest words, to sum up and suggest the lesson of the parable of the talents (Mt. xxv. 14-30).

35. **At even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning.** This mention of the four watches of the night, according to the Roman arrangement, is peculiar to Mk. The watches were: 6 to 9 p.m.; 9 to 12 p.m.; 12 to 3 a.m.; 3 to 6 a.m.

Lest coming on a sudden, he find you sleeping.
And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch.

36
37

CHAPTER XIV

OUR LORD IS ANOINTED BY ST. MARY MAGDALENE AT BETHANY—THE PREPARATION OF THE PASCHAL SUPPER—THE LAST SUPPER—THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN—THE BETRAYAL AND ARREST OF OUR LORD—THE TRIAL OF OUR LORD BEFORE CAIAPHAS—THE DENIAL OF ST. PETER

Now the feast of the pasch, and of the Azymes was **1** after two days; and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might by some wile lay hold on him, and kill him.

36. Lest coming on a sudden. "During the night, the captain of the Temple made his rounds. On his approach, the guards had to rise, and salute him in a particular manner. Any guard found asleep when on duty was beaten, or his garments were set on fire—a punishment, as we know, actually awarded." (Cp. Rom. xiii. 11; 1 Thess. v. 2.)

37. Watch. St. Matthew adds here the parables of the ten virgins and of the talents (xxv. 1-30), with a further description of the Last Judgment. Thus ended the great discourse on Mount Olivet, and the sun set on the Tuesday of the first Holy Week—the day of our Lord's life on earth, of which, with the exception of Good Friday, the Gospel furnishes us with the fullest record.

1. The feast of the pasch. This was the chief of the three great annual Jewish Feasts, the other two being the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles, or of the ingathering of the harvest. It was eminently an historical festival, when year after year, from generation to generation, the Jews recalled, as in "a living drama," the great story of the national deliverance, the awful night when there was not a house in Egypt where there was not one dead, when the Destroying Angel "passed over" (Hebrew "pesech" = "passing over") the houses of the Israelites, and they were delivered. No other festival was so full of typical meaning, or pointed so clearly "to the good things to come." Its chief features were: (1) the offering of a *single* victim for each Paschal company; (2) the Paschal meal

- 2 But they said: Not on the festival day, lest there should be a tumult among the people.
- 3 And when he was in Bethania, in the house of Simon, the leper, and was at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of precious spikenard: and breaking the alabaster box, she poured it out upon his head.

with which the Festival began; (3) the eating of *unleavened* bread during the whole time it lasted. The form of the celebration was as follows: On the 10th day of Nisan, corresponding to the close of March or the beginning of April, each Paschal company, which might not exceed twenty or be less than ten, was to select a lamb or kid, a male of the first year, and keep it till the 14th day. If pronounced by the priests to be free from blemish, it was to be slain in the Court of the Tabernacle, and its blood poured round the altar of Burnt-offering. It was then, after being flayed, to be taken to the house where the Paschal company intended to assemble, to be roasted with fire, whole and entire, without the breaking of a single bone, and to be eaten with unleavened bread, a symbol of purity, and bitter herbs. The Festival lasted from the 14th to the 21st of Nisan, and during this period nothing but unleavened bread might be eaten, and all leaven was to be carefully removed from the house before the 14th. Thus these days were called "the Azymes," or the Days of Unleavened Bread. (Cp. Acts xii. 3; xx. 6.)—**After two days.** The day here spoken of is therefore the Wednesday after the first Palm Sunday. (Cp. Mt. xxvi. 1.)—**And the chief priests and the scribes.** Mt. (xxvi. 3) tells us that they were gathered together in the house of Caiphas, who for some time past had urged that our Lord should be put to death. (Cp. Lk. xix. 47; Jn. xi. 49-51.) All were now agreed that this course must be pursued: the only question was *how* it could be best carried out. (Cp. Lk. xxii. 2.)—**Sought**—"kept on seeking."—**By some wile.** So, too, in Mt. Cp. Ps. xxi. 17: "Many dogs have encompassed me: the council of the malignant hath besieged me."

2. **Not on the festival day.** Cp. Acts xii. 3, 4. The enthusiasm of the people caused by the recent raising of Lazarus from the dead, and as shown in the triumphal entry of our Lord into Jerusalem on the previous Sunday, would make the chief priests doubly afraid of a rising among the people. The Jewish priests and ancients were planning how to postpone the death of our Lord until after the great Festival day; while our Lord himself determined to be crucified during the festal time, for he is our true Pasch. (Cp. 1 Cor. v. 7.) He was offered because he willed it, and when he willed it.

3. **And when he was in Bethania.** This banquet took place, as St. John is careful to tell us, "six days before the pasch"—

Now there were some that had indignation within 4 themselves, and said: Why was this waste of the ointment made?

For this ointment might have been sold for more than 5 three hundred pence, and given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

i.e., on the Saturday before Palm Sunday (xii. 1, 2, 12), but both Mt. and Mk. put it here, as explaining how Judas came to visit the high-priests.—**Simon, the leper.** Some identify this Simon with the Simon who entertained our Lord, as recorded by St. Luke (vii. 40). St. John tells us that at this banquet Martha served, but Lazarus, lately raised from the dead, was one of them that were at table with our Lord (xii. 2).—**A woman—i.e., St. Mary Magdalen.** St. John gives her name (xii. 3), and makes it clear that she was the sister of Lazarus.—**An alabaster box.** At Alabastron in Egypt there was a manufactory of small vases for holding perfumes, which were made from a stone found in the neighbouring mountains. It was also plentiful in the neighbourhood of Damascus. The Greeks gave to these vases the name of the town from which they came, calling them *alabastrons*.—**Of ointment of precious spikenard.** St. John says it was "of great value," and Mary had bought "a pound" of it (xii. 3). This nard was an Indian plant, a product of the Himalayas, and was used by extravagant Israelites, and later on by Greeks and Romans. It was the most costly oil for anointing of antiquity. The word "genuine" or "real" should be inserted before the adjective "precious." It was not an imitation.—**Breaking the alabaster box.** A detail peculiar to Mk. "The house was filled with the odour of the ointment" (Jn. xii. 3).—**She poured it out.** The Greek verb is very expressive. It implies that every drop was poured—not a drop was left—and there was so much of it that the process took some time. Our Lord could not now say, as he had said to Simon: "My head with oil thou didst not anoint" (Lk. vii. 46).—**Upon his head.** St. John has: "she anointed the *feet* of Jesus, and wiped his *feet* with her hair." Doubtless, she anointed both the head and the feet. Cp. Cant. i. 11: "While the king was at his repose, my spikenard sent forth the odour thereof."

4. **There were some that had indignation.** St. John (xii. 4), represents Judas Iscariot as the leader and spokesman of these. "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence," he asked, "and given to the poor?" According to Mk., the last drop of the oil had been poured out before anyone spoke, but very likely indignant looks and whispered remarks had been previously exchanged.

5. **More than three hundred pence.** Two hundred pence had been fixed as the price of sufficient bread to feed 5,000 men! (vi. 37). This helps us to estimate the preciousness of the oint-

- 6 But Jesus said: Let her alone, why do you molest her? She hath wrought a good work upon me.
- 7 For the poor you have always with you: and whensoever you will, you may do them good: but me you have not always.
- 8 She hath done what she could: she is come beforehand to anoint my body for the burial.
- 9 Amen, I say to you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done, shall be told for a memorial of her.
- 10 And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests, to betray him to them.

ment. Mk. and Jn. alone mention the price, and, as usual, Mk. is richest in detail. Fixing the *denarius* at 7½d., this makes the price of the ointment to be £9 7s. 6d.—**Given to the poor.** The Passover was perhaps a suitable time for such alms. (Cp. Jn. xiii. 29.) If a labourer's daily wage was a *denarius* (Mt. xx. 2), more than 300 labourers could have been paid with what Mary Magdalen gave for the ointment!—**And they murmured against her—only in Mk.** The Greek word for "murmured" is very strong. It literally means "to snort," as of a horse.

6. **Why do you molest her?**—"why do you occasion troubles to her?" For the phrase "a good work," cp. Jn. x. 32.

7. **Whensoever you will, you may do them good—only in Mk.** (Cp. Mt. xxv. 40, 45. Also cp. Rom. xv. 26; Gal. ii. 10; 2 Cor. viii. 1-3.)

8. **She hath done what she could.** Cp. 2 Cor. viii. 12. The whole of this pathetic verse is peculiar to Mk. Note the pathos in the word "beforehand," and imagine, if you can, the effect which the speaking of that word "burial" must have had on the minds of the disciples. They would feel, as never before, that our Lord's predictions of his Passion must be taken quite literally.—**For the burial.** Fragrant unguents were used for anointing the dead body after it had been washed—a process to be distinguished from embalming, which, as we see from Jn. xix. 39, consisted of laying myrrh and aloes in the folds of the grave-clothes.

9. **Amen, I say to you.** These words are omitted by Jn., but are reported by Mt. in almost identical words. Cp. 1 Kings ii. 30: "whosoever shall glorify me, him will I glorify: but they that despise me, shall be despised."

10. **And Judas Iscariot.** Twelve months before this date our Lord had spoken of him as a "devil" (Jn. vi. 71); his heart was estranged from his Master, and "he was a thief" (Jn. xii. 6). And now "Satan entered into him" (Lk. xxii. 3). Note that St. Mark here gives him his full name.—**One of the twelve.**

Who hearing it were glad; and they promised him they **11** would give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

Now on the first day of the unleavened bread, when **12** they sacrificed the pasch, the disciples say to him: Whither wilt thou that we go and prepare for thee to eat the pasch?

And he sendeth two of his disciples, and saith to them: **13** Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water: follow him.

The Greek yields a note of pathos here, which is lost in the translation. It should be: "*that one of the twelve,*" "*the only one*" who did this deed.—**Went to the chief priests.** St. Matthew implies that he went entirely of his own accord. The "*loss*" of the three hundred pence rankled in his mind; he wanted money, and money he would have; and he said to the chief priests: "What will you give me, and I will deliver him unto you?" (Mt. xxvi. 15). Lk. implies that Judas and the priests discussed the matter at considerable length (xxii. 4).

11. Were glad. Yes, and they *showed* how glad they were, as the Greek verb implies. The same word is used of the joy of the Apostles when first they saw their risen Lord. "The disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord" (Jn. xx. 20).—**They promised they would give him money.** Mt. alone mentions the amount. "They appointed to him thirty pieces of silver" (about £4), and the word "*appointed*" implies that they paid Judas at once, and he went back to our Lord with the blood-money in his girdle! Thirty pieces of silver was the price of a slave. "If it be good in your eyes, bring hither my wages: and they weighed for my wages thirty pieces of silver" (Zach. xi. 12).—**Conveniently.** Lk. explains this as "*in the absence of the multitude.*"

12. On the first day of the unleavened bread—i.e., Holy Thursday. Our Lord seems to have spent the Wednesday of this week in quiet and seclusion at Bethany. (Cp. Mt. xxvi. 17; Lk. xxii. 7).—**When they sacrificed**—"when they were accustomed to sacrifice." Mk. inserts this explanation for the benefit of his Roman readers.—**The disciples say.** They may have thought that our Lord might wish to eat the Passover at Bethany, for that village was reckoned, as regards religious purposes, to be a part of Jerusalem by the Rabbis, and the lamb might be eaten there, though it must be killed at the Temple. The spontaneous question of the disciples shows that they had performed this task for their Master in previous years.

13. He sendeth two of his disciples. Mt. does not specify the number, while Lk. alone gives their names—viz., Peter and John (xxii. 8).—**A man carrying a pitcher of water.** It was

14 And whithersoever he shall go in, say to the master of the house, The master saith, Where is my refectory, where I may eat the pasch with my disciples?

And he will shew you a large dining-room furnished:
16 and there prepare ye for us.

15 And his disciples went their way, and came into the city; and they found as he had told them, and they prepared the pasch.

17 And when evening was come, he cometh with the twelve.

generally the task of women to carry water. Some have conjectured that this "man" was St. Mark himself, and that "the master of the house" (verse 14) was the father of St. Mark. In the Acts we find mention of "the house of Mary the mother of John, who was surnamed Mark," as a place where the early Christians frequently met, and it is thought that it was in this house that the Last Supper was celebrated (Acts xii. 12).

14. The master saith—"the teacher saith." This phrase and the very confidential nature of the whole communication make it probable that the "master of the house" was a friend and disciple of our Lord. It has been conjectured that our Lord gave these directions somewhat mysteriously, in order to keep the place where the Paschal meal was to be eaten concealed from Judas, lest, if he knew the place, he might encompass our Lord's arrest there, before the Last Supper had taken place. Judas *did* know where our Lord was likely to spend that night, and utilized his knowledge for his wicked purpose (Jn. xviii. 2). **My refectory.** The expressive word "my" is peculiar to Mk.

15. Furnished—*i.e.*, carpeted and supplied with the necessary couches.—For us—only in Mk. Our Lord rarely uses the plural in this inclusive way.

16. The disciples went their way—they came—they found—they prepared. The minute explicitness of this verse shows that it is the narrative of one who took part in the transaction.—**They prepared the pasch.** This was no slight task. The preparation would include the provision of the unleavened cakes, of the bitter herbs, such as lettuce, endive, succory, and horehound, also of the sauce called "charoseth," made of dates, raisins, etc., and of the four cups of red wine mixed with water, and of the lamb.

17. And when evening was come, he cometh with the twelve. What dignity, mingled with sadness, in these words. "The sun was beginning to decline on the horizon, when our Lord and the Twelve descended once more over the Mount of Olives into the Holy City. Before them lay Jerusalem in her festive attire. White tents dotted the sward, gay with the bright flowers of early spring, while from the gorgeous Temple buildings, dazzling

And when they were at table and eating, Jesus saith: **18**
Amen I say to you, one of you that eateth with me
shall betray me.

in their snow-white marble and gold, rose the smoke of the altar of burnt-offering. The streets were thronged with strangers, 'devout men out of every nation,' and the flat roofs were covered with eager gazers, feasting their eyes with a first sight of the city for which they had so often longed, or else once more rejoicing in view of the well-remembered localities." Amid such a scene, our Lord came to "the large dining-room furnished," "loving his own who were in the world, and loving them to the end," and saying to them: "with desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer" (Lk. xxii. 15).—**With the twelve.** Judas had therefore gone back to Bethany after his interview with the chief priests, and Peter and John had also returned there to tell our Lord that all was ready for the Paschal meal.

18. And when they were at table. The order of ceremonies for eating the Paschal lamb was as follows: (1) The head of the company took the first cup, called the Cup of Consecration, blessed and distributed it, after which hands were washed. (2) After another blessing, he took some of the bitter herbs, dipped them into the *charoseth*, ate a small portion, "the size of an olive," and passed on the rest to the others, blessing God for the fruits of the earth. (3) The *meaning* of the Paschal rite was explained to all. This was called the *haggada*, or "showing forth" (cp. 1 Cor. xi. 26). (4) The second cup of wine was then drunk, and hands were again washed, while the first part of the *Hallel* (i.e., Ps. cxii. and cxiii.) were sung. (5) The head of the company now took the cakes of unleavened bread, gave thanks, broke one of them, pronounced a sentence of thanksgiving, and distributed a portion to each. All wrapped some bitter herbs round their portion, dipped it in the *charoseth*, and ate it. (6) The flesh of the Paschal lamb was now eaten, and the head of the company gave thanks over the third cup of wine, known as the Cup of Blessing. (7) The remainder of the *Hallel* (i.e., Ps. cxiv., cxv., cxvi., cxvii.) was now sung, and the fourth cup, known as the Cup of Joy, was drunk. It was probably to this cup that Lk. xxii. 17 refers (Edersheim).—**And when they were at table.** From Jn. (xiii. 23, 24) it appears that our Lord reclined between St. Peter and St. John. Originally it was customary to eat the Passover standing, but by the time of our Lord it was usually eaten in a recumbent posture, and this was regarded as a sign of the freedom from slavery which had been gained by the exodus from Egypt.—**Jesus saith.** Jn. tells us "he was troubled in spirit" as he spoke the words. The washing of the feet, recorded only by St. John, had already taken place (Jn. xiii. 2-17).—**Who eateth with me**—peculiar to Mk. The revelation of this feature of the Sacred Passion is

- 19 But they began to be sorrowful, and to say to him one by one: Is it I?
- 20 Who saith to them: One of the twelve, who dippeth with me his hand in the dish.
- 21 And the Son of man indeed goeth as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man shall be betrayed. It were better for him, if that man had not been born.
- 22 And whilst they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessing, broke, and gave to them, and said: Take ye. This is my body.

left for the very last. Cp. Ps. xl. 10: "Even the man of my peace, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, hath greatly supplanted me." Cp. Ps. liv. 14: "If my enemy had reviled me, I would verily have borne with it: but thou a man of one mind, my guide, and my familiar, who didst take sweet meats together with me." (Cp. Jn. xiii. 18.)

19. But they began. Omit the "but," which is not in the Greek. The dramatic power of the narrative is much increased by the omission.—**To be sorrowful**—"to be overwhelmed with grief." Their sorrow was indeed the "sorrow according to God," so wonderfully described in 2 Cor. vii. 11.—**One by one**—only in Mk. St. John adds a vivid touch to the picture: "the disciples therefore *looked one upon another*, doubting of whom he spoke" (xiii. 22).—**Is it I?** Not one of them said "Is it he?"—namely, Judas. Not one of them seems even to have suspected him.

20. **One of the twelve.** These pathetic words are peculiar to Mk.—**Who dippeth with me his hand in the dish**—a token of intimacy. Cp. Ruth ii. 14: "And Boaz said to Ruth: At meal-time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. So she sat at the side of the reapers, and ate, and was filled." (Cp. Jn. xiii. 26.)

21. **The Son of man indeed goeth.** The Greek word for "goeth" implies "goeth readily," and is frequently used by St. John of our Lord's death. It breathes the spirit described by St. Paul in Phil. ii. 8. (Cp. Jn. viii. 14, 21; xiii. 3, 33; Heb. x. 7.)

22. Notice the large number of verbs in this verse. Read Mt. xxvi. 26-29; Lk. xxii. 17-20; and cp. 1 Cor. xi. 23, 29. The ceremonial acts of our Lord are similar to those adopted by him at the miracles of feeding the five thousand and the four thousand. Mt. has: "Take ye, and eat: this is my body." Mk. has: "Take ye, this is my body." Lk. has: "This is my body, which is given for you." Thus was fulfilled the promise made by our Lord a year previously, after feeding the five thousand: "The bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world" (Jn. vi. 52).

And having taken the chalice, giving thanks, he gave **23** it to them. And they all drank of it.

And he said to them: This is my blood of the new **24** testament, which shall be shed for many.

Amen, I say to you, that I will drink no more of the **25** fruit of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it new in the kingdom of God.

And when they had said an hymn, they went forth to **26** the mount of Olives.

And Jesus saith to them: You will all be scandalized **27** in my regard this night: for it is written, I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep shall be dispersed.

23. He gave it to them. The words of our Lord recorded in verse 24 would, of course, be spoken *before* our Lord gave them the chalice. Our Lord's words recall the saying in Exod. xxiv. 8: "And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it upon the people, and he said: This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you." (Cp. Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14; Heb. ix. 22.)

24. And he said to them. Mt. has: "Drink ye all of this, for this is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many, for the remission of sins." Mk. has: "This is my blood of the new testament which shall be shed for many." Lk. has: "This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you." (Cp. Jer. xxxi. 31; Heb. viii. 8.)

25. This verse is very mysterious, and it is not easy to be sure of our Lord's precise meaning. He seems to look forward to the great future, when his friends and disciples shall "eat and drink at his table in his kingdom, and shall sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Lk. xxii. 29, 30). Indeed, "a certain man has now made a great supper, and invited many"; "all things are made new"; there is a new covenant, a new commandment, a new kingdom; and "blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Apoc. xix. 9). The great Sacrifice and the Feast of Love on earth now instituted are to prepare men for the eternal Banquet in the Home where our Lord is preparing a place for us, for his desire is that where he is, we also should be (Jn. xvii. 24).

26. An hymn. This would consist of Ps. cxiv., cxv., cxvi., cxvii.—the concluding portion of the *Hallel*.—**They went forth.** Lk. adds: "according to his custom." "Jesus often resorted thither with his disciples," says St. John, so that "Judas knew the place well" (Jn. xviii. 2).

27. And Jesus saith to them. It is not clear *where* this conversation took place. St. John's narrative (xiii. 31) seems to place it in the Supper-room, after the departure of Judas. But both Mt. and Mk. place it on the road to the Mount of Olives.—**You will all be scandalized.** Our Lord had used this word

- 28 But after I shall be risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.
- 29 But Peter saith to him: Although all shall be scandalized in thee, yet not I.
- 30 And Jesus saith to him: Amen I say to thee, to-day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.
- 31 But he spoke the more vehemently: Although I should

so often and so sternly that this utterance must have had a terrible effect on the disciples. (Cp. Lk. vii. 23; Jn. xvi. 1.) In the course of the Last Supper, the Apostles had strongly renewed and protested their faith in our Lord, and our Lord had answered them: "Do you now believe? Behold the hour cometh, and it is now come, that you shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone" (Jn. xvi. 29-32). Thus, in the word "scandalized" our Lord seems to allude to the desertion of himself by the Apostles in the Garden of Olives, to their not being able to profess their faith in the hour of danger. The quotation from Zacharias almost pleads an excuse for their conduct: if the shepherd is struck, what more natural than that the sheep should run away? while in the promise of a visit after the Resurrection our Lord seeks to console them in their present sorrow and anxiety. For our Lord's own portrait of himself as the Good Shepherd, cp. Jn. x. 4.—It is written. The quotation is from Zac. xiii. 7.

28. But after I shall be risen again. As usual, our Lord couples the humiliation of his Passion with the glory of his Resurrection.—I will go before you into Galilee—a new detail, never heard before. (Cp. Mk. xvi. 7.) How the sound of the word "Galilee" would cheer the Apostles in this sad hour! It was their home: it was the scene of their life with our Lord: and there they would meet him again!

29. But Peter saith to him. In three ways did St. Peter err: (a) he contradicted his Master; (b) he put himself in a class above the other disciples; (c) he relied on his own strength, not on the help of God. It were better for him had he repeated his prayer: "Lord, save me" (Mt. xiv. 30). The Greek emphasizes the self-assertion of St. Peter far more than it is possible to do in English. "It is quite possible for the others to be scandalized in thee, but certainly I shall not be so." Mk., as usual, emphasizes any weakness in St. Peter.

30. To-day—only in Mk. According to the Jewish reckoning. Good Friday had already begun.—Twice—only in Mk.—Thou—very emphatic, corresponding to the emphatic "I" in verse 29.

31. He spoke—"he continued to talk."—The more vehemently—"with excessive vehemence"—only in Mk.—Although I should die—"although it be thought necessary that I should

die together with thee, I will not deny thee. And in like manner also said they all.

And they came to a farm called Gethsemani. And **32** he saith to his disciples: Sit you here, while I pray.

And he taketh Peter and James and John with him; **33** and he began to fear and to be heavy.

And he saith to them: My soul is sorrowful even unto **34** death: stay you here, and watch.

die." St. Thomas had suggested this idea previously (cp. Jn. xi. 16); and for the idea of dying with our Lord in order that we may reign with him, cp. Rom. vi. 2-6; Col. ii. 12.—**I will not deny thee**—"never will I be guilty of denying thee."

32. Gethsemani. The name means the "oil-press." It was a "garden" (Jn. xviii. 1), or an olive orchard on the slope of Olivet. (Cp. Mt. xxvi. 36; Lk. xxii. 40.) To reach it, they would cross the brook Cedron, as King David, a type of our Lord, had done in face of his rebellious son Absalom: "the king also himself went over the brook Cedron, and all the people marched towards the way that looketh to the desert" (2 Kings xv. 23). Some consider that it belonged to Mary, the mother of Mark.—**While I pray.** Mt. has "while I go yonder and pray," pointing to the exact spot where our Lord intended to go for prayer. It is a detail which we should quite expect from Mk., but he omits it. Our Lord always prayed before beginning any matter of special importance. (Cp. vi. 46; Lk. iii. 2; v. 16; vi. 12; xi. 1.)

33. He taketh Peter and James and John—as he had done when raising the daughter of Jairus to life (Mk. vi. 37), and at the Transfiguration (Mt. xvii. 2).—**He began to fear.** The Greek word is very strong, and peculiarly Marcan. It strikes the note of *amazed awe*—of consternation and even bewilderment—as though the vision of sin which then came before our Lord's mind, amazed and crushed him. It is far more strong than the word used by St. Matthew—"to grow sorrowful."—**To be heavy.** Here both Mt. and Mk. use the same word, though it is translated differently in the Douay version. It means "to lose all heart," "to be unhinged," "to be undone"—it portrays a feeling of having something great to do, but of being utterly at a loss as to how it can be done—a distracted, confused, and restless state of mind that "looks for someone to comfort," yet, in this case, is destined "to find none." The word occurs only once more in N.T. (Phil. ii. 26). Our Lord then experienced "a sense of ruin, which is worse than pain." The root idea of the Greek word is that of "being away from home"—hence "confused and solitary."

34. Sorrowful—"very sorrowful." (Cp. Jn. xii. 27.) "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in even unto my soul; I stick fast in the mire of the deep, and there is no sure standing. I am come into the depth of the sea, and a tempest

- 35 And when he was gone forward a little, he fell flat on the ground and he prayed, that if it might be, the hour might pass from him.
- 36 And he saith: Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; remove this chalice from me: but not what I will, but what thou wilt.

hath overwhelmed me" (Ps. lxxviii. 1-3). "Our Lord now drew back the bolts and fastenings, and opened the gates, and the floods fell right upon his soul in all their fulness. This is what St. Mark tells us of him, and he is said to have written it from the very mouth of St. Peter, who was one of three witnesses present at the time. . . . There, then, in that most awful hour, knelt the Saviour of the world, putting off the defences of his divinity, dismissing his reluctant Angels, who in myriads were ready at his call, and opening his arms, baring his breast, sinless as he was, to the assault of his foe—of a foe whose breath was a pestilence, and whose embrace was an agony. There he knelt, motionless and still, while the vile and horrible fiend clad his spirit in a robe steeped in all that is hateful and heinous in human crime, which clung close round his heart, and filled his conscience, and found its way into every sense and pore of his mind, and spread over him a moral leprosy, till he almost felt himself to be that which he never could be, and which his foe would fain have made him. Oh, the horror, when he looked, and did not know himself, and felt as a foul and loathsome sinner, from his vivid perception of that mass of corruption which poured over his head, and ran down even to the skirts of his garments! Oh, the distraction when he found his eyes, and hands, and feet, and lips, and heart, as if the members of the Evil One, and not of God!" (Cardinal Newman: "Mental Sufferings of Our Lord in His Passion").—**And watch**—Mt. adds: "with me." This is almost the only personal request our Lord is recorded to have made, but it was denied him! "He trod the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with him" (Is. lxiii. 3). There is a striking parallel to these words of our Lord in the story of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac: "And Abraham said to his young men: Stay you here with the ass: I and the boy will go with speed as far as yonder, and after we have worshipped, will return to you" (Gen. xxii. 5).

35. **A little**—Lk. has: "a stone's cast."—**He fell flat on the ground**—only in Mk. Mt. has: "he fell upon his face," while Lk. speaks only of our Lord's "kneeling down."—**He prayed**. Cp. Heb. v. 7.—**The hour might pass from him**—a note peculiar to Mk., "summarizing and interpreting the prayers which follow." For the phrase, cp. Jn. xvii. 1; vii. 30; ii. 4. The "hour" stands for that which the hour is to bring.

36. **Abba, Father**—only in Mk. Abba is the Aramaic for "Father," and is the actual word used by our Lord. (Cp. Rom.

And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping. And he 37
saith to Peter: Simon, sleepest thou? couldst thou not
watch one hour?

Watch ye, and pray that you enter not into tempta- 38
tion. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

And going away again, he prayed, saying the same 39
words.

And when he returned, he found them again asleep 40
(for their eyes were heavy), and they knew not what to
answer him.

viii. 15; Gal. iv. 6.)—**All things are possible to thee.** Both Mt. and Lk. put these words in a conditional form ("if it is possible," "if thou wilt"); Mk. alone puts them thus absolutely, as a statement of fact.—**Remove**—"carry past me." Mk. and Lk. are here far more striking than Mt., who has: "let this chalice pass from me," for their wording pictures the Eternal Father as actually holding the chalice to his beloved Son, and awaiting his acceptance of it. (Cp. Jn. xviii. 11.)—**What thou wilt.** Cp. Mt. vi. 10; 1 Jn. v. 14, 15. There is no need here to supply "be done" after the words "I will" or "thou wilt"; the prayer as it stands is most clear, and its very abruptness does but give emphasis to it, and shows the intensity of our Lord's agony, for in times of great emotion prayer is wont to advance and express itself by abrupt phrases.

37. **Cometh—finding—saith.** Note the three vivid presents.—**Simon, sleepest thou?**—only in Mk. (Cp. Jn. xxi. 15.) St. Peter had protested fidelity to our Lord more than the others, and by his position ought to have been to them an example. So our Lord addresses him.—**Couldst thou not watch?** Mt. has "could ye not watch?" It is as though our Lord said: "Thou didst say, Simon, thou wouldst go with me to prison and to death: and canst thou not watch one short hour with me?"

38. **Watch ye, and pray.** Cp. 1 Pet. iv. 7. Our Lord now addresses all three disciples.—**Enter not into temptation.** Cp. 1 Cor. x. 13; James v. 7; 2 Pet. ii. 9.—**The Spirit . . . the flesh.** For the contrast, cp. Jn. iii. 6; Rom. viii. 8, 9; Gal. v. 17; 1 Pet. ii. 11. St. Peter, as a rule so ready with an answer or a question, has now nothing to say, and is silent.

39. **And going away again.** Mk. says nothing of the appearance of the Angel to comfort our Lord, nor of our Lord's sweat of blood. These are recorded only by Lk. The phrase "saying the same words" tells us that the agony of our Lord continued as intensely as before, the same causes pressing still their full weight on his mind.

40. **For their eyes were heavy**—"for their eyes were very heavy." Lk. adds: "for sorrow." "The corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down

- 41 And he cometh the third time, and saith to them: Sleep ye now, and take your rest. It is enough: the hour is come; behold the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners.
- 42 Rise up, let us go. Behold he that will betray me is at hand.
- 43 And while he was yet speaking, cometh Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve: and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the ancients.

the mind that museth upon many things" (Wisd. ix. 15).—And they knew not what to answer him—only in Mk. How like, yet how unlike, is this scene in its detail to that of the Transfiguration! The whole verse bears strong indication of Petrine authorship. (Cp. Mk. ix. 5.)

41. And he cometh the third time. Our Lord could say: "I have power to enter my agony: I have power to leave it again." "Of his own will did he hunger and thirst: of his own will did he fear and become heavy: of his own will did he die" (St. John Damascene).—Sleep ye now—"sleep ye henceforth"—i.e., I will not again interrupt you. The words are, of course, ironical. For other instances of our Lord's use of irony, cp. Mk. vii. 9; Lk. iv. 23; v. 31.—It is enough—only in Mk.—a sharp phrase marking abruptly the transition from one scene or duty to another. The Greek word occurs frequently as a *form of receipt*—e.g., to a bill. Some would apply the word more closely to our Lord, thus: "you may sleep now: I have suffered and prayed sufficiently, and by an Angel from heaven I have received the strength and consolation which I sought for by means of your prayers together with me."—Shall be betrayed—"is being betrayed"—a most vivid present.

42. Rise up, let us go. For the phrase, cp. Jn. xiv. 31.—He that will betray me. Our Lord no longer speaks of him by his own name! Note the wonderful calmness in the words of our Lord in verses 41 and 42.

43. And while he was yet speaking. The word "immediately" should be inserted between "and" and "while," and helps us to realize the rapidity with which the ten short and disjointed phrases of verses 41 and 42 must have been spoken. It also reveals to us the approach of Judas, "with a band of men, with lanterns, torches, and weapons" (cp. Jn. xviii. 3), who came thus provided, though the Paschal moon was at the full, for "in the rocky ravine of Cedron there would fall great deep shadows from the declivity of the mountains and projecting rocks, and there were caverns and grottoes in which a fugitive might easily retreat."—Cometh—"arriveth"—a vivid present. St. Luke says Judas led them. (Cp. Acts i. 16.)—Judas Iscariot. Mk.

And he that betrayed him, had given them a sign, 44 saying: Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he; lay hold on him, and lead him away carefully.

And when he was come, immediately going up to him, 45 he saith: Hail, Rabbi; and he kissed him.

alone here gives him his full name. (Cp. Mt. xxvi. 47; Lk. xxii, 47; Jn. xviii. 2.)—**One of the twelve.** So it is strikingly put in all three Synoptists—"a record of the horror of the disciples that such a thing could have been possible."—**A great multitude.** These consisted mainly of (a) the regular Levitical guards of the Temple, (b) a detachment from the Roman cohort quartered in the Tower of Antonia, under the tribune in command of the garrison, who is specially mentioned by St. John (xviii. 12). Altogether these may have made up nearly two hundred.—**Staves—i.e., stout sticks.**

44. A sign. This terrible feature of the betrayal is recorded only by Mt. and Mk., and the Greek word for "sign" is different in both. Mt. uses the more ordinary word, but Mk. uses a word which expresses a *token*, carefully agreed upon between two parties. And this token was of Judas's own proposing! He had never imagined that our Lord would himself come forth to meet his enemies (Jn. xviii. 2-5).—**Lay hold on him.** Why does Judas go out of his way to add this direction? His undertaking is fulfilled by the kiss, and the rest surely belonged to, and might safely be left to, the agents of the Jews. Yet he volunteers advice, for he knew that our Lord could pass through their hands, did he so will it, as he had done on former occasions. It is as though he said: "Unless you hold him fast, he will escape you, should it please him so to do."—**Carefully**—"securely." No wonder that after the advice of Judas they "bound" our Lord, as St. John tells us (xviii. 12). The words "lead him away carefully" are peculiar to Mk.

45. And when he was come, immediately going up to him. The wording of St. Mark is most vivid and descriptive of the indecent haste of Judas, as though not a moment was to be lost. Mt.'s "forthwith coming to Jesus" is comparatively tame.—**And he kissed him.** The Greek word for "kissed" is here different to the one used in verse 44. In verse 44 it is the simple verb to denote the act of kissing; but in this verse it is a compound verb to denote effusive and repeated kissing, most tenderly, as between two intimate friends, who have not met for long. The same strong word is used of St. Mary Magdalen's kissing the feet of our Lord (Lk. vii. 38, 45), of the kissing of the prodigal son by his father on his return home (Lk. xv. 20), and of the kissing of St. Paul by the Christians on the sea-shore at Miletus (Acts xx. 37). It is worthy of note that at this point both Mt. and Lk. report certain words spoken by our Lord to Judas, which are omitted by Mk. Their omission points strongly to the fact that St. Peter's testimony is being followed as to the

- 46 But they laid hands on him, and held him.
 47 And one of them that stood by, drawing a sword, struck a servant of the chief priest, and cut off his ear.
 48 And Jesus answering, said to them: Are you come out as to a robber, with swords and staves to apprehend me?
 49 I was daily with you in the temple, teaching, and you

whole incident. That Apostle was far too full of feeling at the time, both as to the treachery of Judas and as to his own thought of striking a blow in defence of his Master, to remember our Lord's words, if indeed he heard them. Mk.'s omission is thus most suggestive.

46. **Laid hands on him, and held him.** Both these verbs express cruel and violent handling of our Lord. (Cp. Acts iv. 3; v. 18.) But he "was offered because it was his own will, and he opened not his mouth: he was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and was dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he did not open his mouth" (Is. liii. 7).

47. **One of them.** St. John alone tells us his name—Simon Peter (xviii. 10).—**Drawing a sword.** The Galileans, to which class St. Peter belonged, were wont to carry a sword under their cloak to defend themselves against robbers on the journey, when they came up to Jerusalem for the Feasts. At the Last Supper our Lord had said: "he that hath no sword, let him sell his coat and buy one," to which the disciples answered: "Lord, behold here are two swords," quite misunderstanding, of course, the sense in which our Lord had spoken. This is recorded by Lk. only (xxii. 36, 38), who also alone now tells us that at this point "they that were about our Lord, seeing what would follow, said to him: Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" But, of course, St. Peter could not wait for any reply to such a question; his Master was in danger, and that was enough for him. He must do something at least to defend him.—**A servant of the chief priest.** His name was Malchus, as St. John alone tells us (xviii. 10).—**Cut off his ear.** Lk. and Jn. both say it was his *right* ear. Mt. and Jn. alone give our Lord's rebuke to St. Peter, and Mt. by far the most fully. Lk. alone records that our Lord "touched the ear, and healed the servant."

48. **Are you come out as to a robber.** Notice the wonderful calm and majesty of these words, and how powerful and dignified a protest they form! It is as though our Lord said: "Have you thought it necessary to turn out in the darkness of the night to capture me, as though I were a house-breaker and a thief? and have you brought swords and sticks to defend yourselves against me, whose hands have only been used to bless and to heal? Had you waited till the morning, I should have been in the city and Temple once more to teach, as I have been so often this very week!"

49. **And you did not lay hands on me.** Why? Because they feared the people, and did not wish to run the risk of being

did not lay hands on me. But that the scriptures may be fulfilled.

Then his disciples leaving him, all fled away. 50

And a certain young man followed him, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and they laid hold on him. 51

But he, casting off the linen cloth, fled from them naked. 52

And they brought Jesus to the high priest; and all the priests and the scribes and the ancients assembled together. 53

And Peter followed him afar off, even into the court of the high priest; and he sat with the servants at the fire, and warmed himself. 54

stoned by them. Notice how tenderly our Lord here upbraids them for their cowardice, which had been at the root of all their inaction during the earlier days of Holy Week, without actually charging them with it. Their own consciences would supply the reproof.—**But that the scriptures.** Mt. adds: "the scriptures of the Prophets." Our Lord's sentence is incomplete, as though he dismissed the subject, further words being useless. He uses an ellipsis in this way also in Jn. ix. 3; xv. 25.

50. **All fled away**—"fled away, one and all"—the "all" coming last with emphasis. St. John (xviii. 8) alone records that our Lord had tenderly made petition that they might be allowed to go free. "If, therefore, you seek me, let these go their way."

51. **And a certain young man.** Probably this was St. Mark himself, though we cannot know for certain. He alone records the incident, and some have considered that there was some kind of house or shelter in the garden, where "the young man" was passing the night.—**They laid hold**—"they lay hold"—a vivid present. The word again expresses rough handling.

53. **And they brought Jesus to the high priest**—*i.e.*, to Caiaphas. According to St. John (xviii. 13), they *first* "led our Lord away to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas." (Cp. Mt. xxvi. 57; Lk. xxii. 54.)—**Assembled**—"are assembling"—a vivid present, representing the assembly as greedily flocking together in haste from all sides.

54. **Peter followed.** St. John did the same. He was "known to the high-priest," and "spoke to the portress and brought in Peter," for at first "he had stood at the door without" (Jn. xviii. 15, 16). Before the palace or within its outer porch there was a large open square court, in which public business was transacted.—**He sat**—"he was sitting in company with others"—as Lk. says: "in the midst of them"—*i.e.*, of the Levitical guard.—**At the fire**—"towards the fire," so that the light lit up

- 55 And the chief priests and all the council sought for evidence against Jesus, that they might put him to death, and found none.
- 56 For many bore false witness against him, and their evidences were not agreeing.
- 57 And some rising up bore false witness against him, saying:
- 58 We heard him say, I will destroy this temple made

his face. Mt. adds the reason for his being there: "that he might see the end"!—**Warmed himself.** The altitude of Jerusalem causes the nights at that time of the year especially to be very cold.

55. **Sought for evidence**—"were casting about for evidence." The Greek verb denotes a strained and anxious search, as for something they knew they must procure, but would find difficult to procure, owing to the esteem in which our Lord was then held. By the Law (Deut. xix. 15) they were bound to secure the agreement of at least two witnesses on some specific charge. In the trial before Annas, a clumsy attempt had been made to entangle our Lord by insidious questions about his disciples and his doctrine, but now a more formal character must be given to the proceedings. The trial of our Lord should have been held in the council-hall within the temple enclosure, not at the high-priest's house, and during the daytime, not at night; nor should the condemnation have been made on the same day as the conviction.—**Evidence.** The Law (Deut. xvii. 6) stated: "By the mouth of two or three witnesses shall he die that is to be slain. Let no man be put to death, when only one beareth witness against him."

56. **Their evidences were not agreeing.** The Law said: "One witness shall not rise up against any man, whatsoever the sin or wickedness be: but in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall stand" (Deut. xix. 15)—and not even "two or three" could be found!

57. **And some rising up.** What is here described is a preliminary sifting of evidence against our Lord, before the formal trial begins "in the morning" (xv. 1). For "some" Mt. has very definitely "two"—*i.e.*, the requisite two. "*Last of all there came in two false witnesses*" (Mt. xxvi. 60). At length the required conditions seemed to be satisfied, as stated by the Law. Mk. gives their assertion more fully than Mt., and closes it with the characteristic remark in verse 59: "and not even thus were their witness equal" (*i.e.*, adequate for the purpose). The word "their" in verse 59 is very emphatic.

58. **I will destroy this temple.** Cp. the charge made against St. Stephen (Acts vi. 14). Jeremias had said to the people of old: "I will make this temple like Silo, and I will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth. And when Jeremias had made an end of speaking, the priests and the prophets and all

with hands, and within three days I will build another not made with hands.

And their witness did not agree.

59

And the high priest rising up in the midst, asked Jesus, 60 saying: Answerest thou nothing to the things that are laid to thy charge by these men?

But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again 61 the high priest asked him, and said to him: Art thou the Christ, the Son of the blessed God?

And Jesus said to him: I am. And you shall see the 62 Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming with the clouds of heaven.

the people laid hold on him, saying: Let him be put to death" (Jer. xxvi. 8). Our Lord had certainly said something of the kind in Jerusalem in the first year of his public Ministry. (Cp. Jn. ii. 19.) Had his words rankled in their minds ever since?—**Not made with hands.** For the expression, cp. Acts vii. 48; Acts xvii. 24; 2 Cor. v. 1; Heb. ix. 11.

59. **Their witness did not agree**—"and not even thus was their witness equal"—i.e., sufficient for the purpose.

60. **And the high priest rising up in the midst.** The duplicity of Caiaphas stands out fully in this verse. The testimony against our Lord has completely broken down, yet he has the face to ask our Lord to reply to it. He is in difficulties, and disappointed at its insufficiency, yet he dares to stand up (as though for greater effect), and try to make our Lord incriminate himself!—**In the midst**—for greater solemnity—a touch of St. Mark. Very likely Caiaphas walked right up to our Lord.—**Answerest thou nothing.** There should be a note of interrogation here, and the next words should be translated: "What is it that (i.e., 'how great is the bulk of what') these men witness against thee?"

61. **And answered nothing**—"and did answer nothing." This emphatic and dramatic repetition is peculiar to St. Mark. "All things have their season; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak" (Eccles. iii. 7). Cp. Acts viii. 32; 1 Pet. ii. 23.—**Again the high priest asked him.** Caiaphas sinks deeper still, and uses his priestly office as a tool for extracting evidence from our Lord against himself. In Mt. this is put even more strongly: "I adjure thee by the living God," said Caiaphas, "that thou tell us if thou be the Christ the Son of God" (Mt. xxvi. 63).

62. **And you shall see.** The words and imagery of our Lord are borrowed from the O.T. "I beheld therefore in the vision of the night, and lo, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and he came even to the Ancient of days" (Dan. vii. 13). "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool" (Ps. cix. 1). Cp. Acts vii. 55; Rom. viii. 34; Heb. i. 3-5; 1 Pet. iii. 22.

- 63 Then the high priest rending his garments, saith: What need we any further witnesses?
- 64 You have heard the blasphemy. What think you? Who all condemned him to be guilty of death.
- 65 And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants struck him with the palms of their hands.

63. Rending his garments. According to Leviticus (xxi. 10), the high-priest was forbidden to do this; but in our Lord's day it was understood to be his duty to do so when a blasphemy was uttered in his presence. The rent was never to be sewn up, but was to remain a standing witness of the scandal. To rend one's garments was at once a sign of sorrow and of indignation. (Cp. Is. xxxvii. 1; 1 Mach. ii. 14.) It is interesting to note that Mt. uses one word for "garments," and Mk. another; and the word used by Mk. tells us that Caiaphas rent not only his outer garment, but also his inner one.

64. You have heard the blasphemy. Perhaps this should be a question: "Have you heard the blasphemy?" Death was the legal penalty of blasphemy, and stoning the manner of its execution. "He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, dying let him die: all the multitude shall stone him, whether he be a native or a stranger. He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, dying let him die" (Lev. xxiv. 16). Cp. Jn. x. 30-39; Acts vii. 55-57. —**Who all condemned him**—*i.e.*, all who were present. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had not been summoned to, or at least were not present at, this preliminary meeting. (Cp. Lk. xxiii. 50; Jn. vii. 51.) —**Guilty of death.** Though they thus passed sentence, yet they could not execute it. "It is not lawful for us to put any one to death," the Jews had later to confess to Pilate (Jn. xviii. 31). The right to do so had been taken from them ever since Judaea became a Roman province. The sentence, therefore, needed confirmation, and the matter must be referred to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate.

65. And some began. It was now about 3 a.m. Pilate could not be approached at such an hour, and a second and formal trial of our Lord before the Sanhedrim must take place at day-break. So the interval was filled by the ill-usage and mockery of our Lord. (Cp. Mt. xxvi. 67.) —**To spit on him**—as foretold in x. 34, and as fulfilled a second time in xv. 19. Cp. Job (xxx. 10): "They abhor me, and flee far from me, and are not afraid to spit in my face." Cp. Is. l. 6: "I have given my body to the strikers, and my cheeks to them that plucked them: I have not turned away my face from them that rebuked me, and spat upon me." —**And buffet him**—*i.e.*, to strike him with the fists. —**Prophecy**—*i.e.*, "Who is it that struck thee?" (Lk. xxii. 64). —**The servants**—*i.e.*, the members of the Temple guard, who had arrested our Lord, and were still in charge of

Now when Peter was in the court below, there cometh 66 one of the maidservants of the high priest.

And when she had seen Peter warming himself, 67 looking on him, she saith: Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.

But he denied, saying: I neither know nor understand 68 what thou sayest. And he went forth before the court; and the cock crew.

him.—**Struck him.** The Greek word means “they received him,” and if this reading be correct—and it has great authority—the word should be translated, “they *caught* him with blows”—a most realistic phrase, expressive of blows given in the most cruel possible manner so as to give the maximum of pain.—The palms of their hands. The Greek word may also mean “with sticks.”

66. **There cometh**—a vivid present. Mt. has: “there came to him”—*i.e.*, she crossed the court to the place where St. Peter was sitting, in order to get a better view of his face by the light of the fire.—**One of the maidservants.** St. John tells us that this was “the maid that was the portress,” who had admitted St. Peter and St. John to the court (xviii. 17).

67. **Looking on him**—*i.e.*, carefully and for some time, to make quite sure she was right.—**Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.** This translation quite loses the dramatic force of the Greek, and fails to give us an idea of the excited, almost hysterical, exclamation of the maid. What she cried out was this, “Thou also wast with that Nazarene,” and then (as though she suddenly remembered our Lord’s Name) “. . . Jesus.” To have “been with Jesus of Nazareth” was St. Peter’s greatest privilege. (Cp. Acts i. 21; iv. 13.)

68. **I neither know nor understand.** St. Mark’s account of this first denial seems specially appropriate; the eager and heated repetition (“neither . . . nor”) betrays the sudden and unexpected effort to hide embarrassment, and the order of the words in Greek for “what thou sayest” suggests unusual emotion. These would be better translated: “the thing (quite vaguely) about which thou art speaking.” Others render it (perhaps even more forcibly and jerkily): “I neither know nor understand: thou, what sayest thou?”—as though St. Peter were thoroughly angry, and asked the maid to explain her impertinence.—**Before the court.** St. Peter, therefore, now left the fire, and went into the vestibule which gave access to the open court, in which he had been sitting. This would not be so well lit up as the court, but the maidservant followed him into it. He did not leave the scene of danger altogether, for “he wished to see the end” (Mt. xxvi. 58).—**And the cock crew**—peculiar to St. Mark. This may have been an hour or so after midnight. The cock’s first crow comes while it is still dark, and before he thinks of moving.

- 69 And again a maidservant seeing him, began to say to the standers by: This is one of them.
- 70 But he denied again. And after a while they that stood by said again to Peter: Surely thou art one of them; for thou art also a Galilean.
- 71 But he began to curse and to swear, saying: I know not this man of whom you speak.

69. A maidservant—"the maidservant"—i.e., the same as before. Mt. has "another maid," and Lk. has "another man," which is taken to be one of the bystanders, who now joins in the attack on St. Peter. This is not at all unlikely, and is supported by the words of St. John (xviii. 25): "*they* said therefore to Peter." The loquacity of the maid would naturally communicate itself to the bystanders, and such a piece of gossip would furnish excellent sport and amusement to those who were kept up all night. It is much to be noted that this verse puts St. Peter's conduct in the most unfavourable light possible, as we should expect from St. Mark. If the remark of the maid came only from the one to whom he had already replied, and was merely addressed "to the standers-by," and not to St. Peter at all, his second denial is quite uncalled for, and hence quite without excuse.

70. He denied again. Mt. adds "with an oath," and gives the words of the denial: "I do not know the man."—After a while. Lk. says: "about the space of an hour after" (xxii. 59).—They that stood by. Among these must be included "one of the servants of the high-priest, a kinsman to him whose ear Peter cut off," who is specially mentioned by St. John as being the spokesman (or one of them) at the third denial (Jn. xviii. 26).—For thou art also a Galilean. Mt. has: "for even thy speech doth discover thee." The people of Northern Palestine had peculiarities of speech by which they were easily distinguished from those of Judaea. Their speech had a certain roughness or thickness, and they had a difficulty in pronouncing the gutturals and the *th* sounds. St. Peter apparently went on talking to various bystanders, and his Galilean accent would be noticed more and more, and thus confirmed their suspicions; so now, not merely the maidservant, but quite a company had got together, and accosted St. Peter in a body, determined to sift the matter thoroughly.

71. He began to curse—"he began to declare himself to be Anathema." For the phrase, cp. Acts xxiii. 12; Gal. i. 8, 9; 1 Cor. xvi. 22. St. Peter's imprecation was directed against himself. In the O.T. the common formula is: "May God do so and so to me, and add still more, if," etc.—I know not this man of whom you speak. There is no passage in the other accounts of St. Peter's denials at all to equal the heat and definiteness of these words. Indeed, St. Mark throughout paints the incident

And immediately the cock crew again. And Peter ⁷² remembered the word that Jesus had said unto him: Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt thrice deny me. And he began to weep.

CHAPTER XV

THE TRIAL OF OUR LORD BEFORE PILATE—BARABBAS IS
PREFERRED TO OUR LORD—THE SCOURGING AND
CROWNING WITH THORNS—THE CRUCIFIXION—
JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA BEGS THE BODY OF OUR LORD
FROM PILATE—THE BURIAL OF OUR LORD

AND straightway in the morning, the chief priests hold-¹ing a consultation with the ancients and the scribes

more glaringly than the other three Evangelists. The question as to the *number* of St. Peter's denials has been much discussed. The common opinion is that there were three, corresponding to the triple profession of love extracted from him by our Lord after the Resurrection, and recorded by St. John (xxi. 15-17); but others maintain that there were as many as seven. It should be noted that *all* the Evangelists record *three* denials, and *none* record *more than three*. It may well be supposed that St. Peter repeated his denials on three separate and distinct occasions, but on each occasion he was questioned more than once. We may group the denials as follows:

1. Mt. xxvi. 69, 70; Mk. xiv. 66, 68; Lk. xxii. 55-57; Jn. xviii. 17.

2. Mt. xxvi. 71, 72; Mk. xiv. 69; Lk. xxii. 58; Jn. xviii. 25.

3. Mt. xxvi. 73, 74; Mk. xiv. 70, 71; Lk. xxii. 59, 60; Jn. xviii. 26, 27.

⁷² The cock crew again—*i.e.*, about 2.30 or 3 a.m.—And Peter remembered. Yes, for "the Lord turning looked on Peter," as St. Luke alone tenderly records (xxii. 61).—He began to weep—"and when he thought thereon, he wept" (and continued to weep). Both Mt. and Lk. have "he wept bitterly," while Jn. makes no mention of St. Peter's sorrow. The Greek for this passage has led to much discussion. It may mean (1) casting his cloak over his head, he wept; or (2) following thereupon, he wept—*i.e.*, he at once began to weep; or (3) when he thought thereon, he wept.

1. And straightway in the morning. Lk. (xx. 66) has: "as soon as it was day"—*i.e.*, about 5 or 6 a.m. A tone of indecent

and the whole council, binding Jesus, led him away, and delivered him to Pilate.

haste is manifested in every word of this verse. "Condemn him quickly, and hurry him off to Pilate," is their one idea and desire. (Cp. Mt. xxvii. 1; Lk. xxii. 6; Jn. xviii. 28.) How little did they reflect that they were instruments in executing the Divine plan of our Redemption! (Gal. iii. 13).—**Holding a consultation.** This second council was held to obviate the illegality of deciding a capital case during the night. The main business (the collecting of evidence) had been done during the night in the fashion already described, and now, as St. Luke tells us (xxii. 66-71), this council again (and every part of it was fully represented) sought, as Caiaphas had done, to make our Lord incriminate himself. "If thou be the Christ, tell us," was their demand. "And he said to them: If I shall tell you, you will not believe me, and if I shall also ask you, you will not answer me, nor let me go. But hereafter the Son of man shall be sitting on the right hand of the power of God. Then said they all: Art thou then the Son of God? And he said: You say that I am. Then they said: What need we any further testimony, for we ourselves have heard it *from his own mouth*. And the whole multitude of them rose up, and led him away to Pilate."—**Binding Jesus**—"having bound Jesus." Our Lord had been bound at his arrest in the Garden (Jn. xviii. 12), but perhaps the manacles had been removed while he was in the high-priest's house; now that the streets have to be traversed again, they are replaced.—**Delivered him to Pilate.** St. Mark never calls him "Pontius Pilate," and here introduces him as though his readers would certainly know who he was and what was his office. Pilate was the fifth Procurator of the territory of Judaea, under the Governor of Syria, whose headquarters were at Antioch. He succeeded to this post in A.D. 25, and held it till A.D. 36. He had large powers, including that of life and death. His chief residence was at Caesarea (Acts xxiii. 23), but at the greater festivals, he came to Jerusalem to keep order. His wife's name was Claudia Procula. As Governor, he had shown himself cruel and unscrupulous (Lk. xiii. 1, 2), and cared little for the religious susceptibilities of the Jews, whom he despised, and could not understand. When presiding as *judge*, he would sit on a *bema*, or portable tribunal erected on a tessellated pavement, called in Hebrew "gabbatha" (Jn. xix. 13).—**Delivered him to Pilate.** St. John is careful to tell us (xviii. 28-40) that the Jews found Pilate at the Praetorium, or Tower of Antonia, at the north-west corner of the Temple enclosure, and that "they went not into the hall, that they might not be defiled, but that they might eat the pasch." So Pilate interviewed our Lord *privately*—i.e., apart from the Jews, going out occasionally to refer to them. The Jews now *suppressed* the religious charge on which *they* had condemned our Lord (namely, that of claiming

And Pilate asked him: Art thou the king of the Jews? 2
But he answering saith to him: Thou sayest it.

And the chief priests accused him in many things. 3

And Pilate again asked him, saying: Answerest thou 4
nothing? behold in how many things they accuse thee.

But Jesus still answered nothing; so that Pilate 5
wondered.

Now on the festival day he was wont to release unto 6
them one of the prisoners, whomsoever they demanded.

to be the Son of God—a charge which would not interest Pilate in the least), and trumped up charges which they felt sure *would* be serious in Pilate's eyes—namely, of being a malefactor, of perverting the nation, of forbidding tribute to be given to Caesar, and of saying that he is Christ the *King*. Yes, the King, and therefore a rival to Pilate: not "the son of God," and so no rival to Pilate at all, for "his kingdom is not of this world!" (Cp. Lk. xxiii. 2, 3.)

2. Art thou the king of the Jews? The form of Pilate's question suggests surprise, and the Greek word for "asked" denotes urgent questioning. Pilate pressed our Lord to state the facts. It is as though he said: "Do you really mean to tell me that *you*, a poor unknown man, are a *king*? I can't believe it." Our Lord's answer is given more fully by Jn. (xviii. 33-37). The contrast between our Lord's reply to Pilate and his reply to Caiaphas (xiv. 62) is most striking. With Pilate he appeals to conscience alone; with Caiaphas he made reference to the hopes concerning the Messiah established by the O.T., and hence appealed to him in his office as priest.

3. Accused him in many things. Yes, "in *many* things"! But why so? Blasphemy, as they termed it, was their only charge. Let them bring that to the front, if they be honest and true. But no; and so they bring forward the "many" charges already alluded to. No wonder our Lord made no reply. As St. Ambrose says, "*Bene tacet qui defensione non indiget.*"

4. Answerest thou nothing? Pilate, unable to get a reply from our Lord, "went *again* into the hall," as St. John clearly tells us (xviii. 33), "and called Jesus, and said to him, Art thou the king of the Jews?" And now it was that our Lord deigned to explain to him the nature of his kingship and kingdom, in the words recorded by St. John alone (xviii. 36, 37). This made Pilate go forth, and say to the Jews: "I find no cause in him."

5. Pilate wondered. Mt. adds, "exceedingly." Pilate now sent our Lord to Herod, King of Galilee, who was in Jerusalem at the time. Lk. alone gives an account of this event (xxiii. 5-12).

6. On the festival day—"at each festival day"—i.e., at each Passover.—He was wont to release unto them one of the

- 7 And there was one called Barabbas, who was put in prison with some seditious men, who in the sedition had committed murder.
- 8 And when the multitude was come up, they began to desire that he would do, as he had ever done unto them.
- 9 And Pilate answered them, and said: Will you that I release to you the king of the Jews?
- 10 For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him up out of envy.

prisoners. There is no other evidence than that which the Gospels furnish for this custom. Quite likely it was instituted by Pilate himself, and such a precedent would quickly ripen into a claim. If this be so, the word "he" is emphatic. The custom may, however, have been of Jewish origin, and been continued by the Roman governors from motives of policy. And this view seems favoured by St. John's words (xviii. 39): "You have a custom that I should release one unto you at the Pasch." —Whosoever they demanded—*i.e.*, the one for whose life or liberty they begged. The Greek word used is a technical one for deprecating censure or punishment. (Cp. Acts. iii. 14.)

7. One called Barabbas—"there was the man known as Barabbas." Mt. calls him "a notorious prisoner." Jn. says he was "a robber." Both Mk. and Lk. tell us that he was a murderer.—Who had committed murder—"of such a desperate character that they had committed murder."

8. And when the multitude was come up—*i.e.*, to the place before the abode of Pilate. They had been assembling during our Lord's visit to Herod.—They began to desire. Mk. alone suggests that Pilate was influenced in the Barabbas matter by the appeal of the crowd.

9. Will you—"are you willing." The full and alternative form of the question is given by Mt. (xxvii. 17). It is to be noted that Mk. here records no *answer* to the question of Pilate to the people, though their reply is *implied* in verse 11.—The king of the Jews. Notice how Pilate keeps on repeating this title of our Lord. It amused him to do so, as we may well suppose, and he knew how galling it was to the Jews themselves. This feature is (perhaps naturally) absent from Mt.'s account, but we find it again strongly in that of Jn. (xix. 14, 15).

10. He knew—"he saw quite clearly." Reports of our Lord's success and influence had doubtless reached the ears of Pilate, and he saw clearly that the Jewish priests were envious of his popularity, for it meant the decline of their own prestige.—Out of envy. So, too, in Mt. "Envy is the rottenness of the bones" (Prov. xiv. 30), and beneath its sway a man's principles (*i.e.*, his "bones") lose their strength and become "rotten." "By the envy of the devil, death came into the world, and they follow him that are of his side" (Wisdom. ii. 24, 25).

But the chief priests moved the people, that he should **11** rather release Barabbas to them.

And Pilate again answering, saith to them: What will **12** you then that I do to the king of the Jews ?

But they again cried out: Crucify him. **13**

And Pilate saith to them: Why, what evil hath he **14** done ? But they cried out the more: Crucify him.

And so Pilate, being willing to satisfy the people, **15** released to them Barabbas, and delivered up Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

11. Moved the people. The Greek word is very strong, and means literally "earthquaked the people," denoting the unprincipled and untiring efforts of the chief priests to obtain the rejection of our Lord. It was probably at this juncture that Pilate received the urgent message from his wife (Mt. xxvii. 19), imploring him "to have nothing to do with that just man." "And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him" (Jn. xix. 12).

12. And Pilate again answering. We can trace clearly the predicament in which Pilate found himself in St. Mark's vivid and realistic narrative. Twice over, as St. Luke tells us, after our Lord's return from Herod, did Pilate propose to scourge our Lord, and then to "let him go," for he "desired to release Jesus" (xxiii. 20). "But they cried out saying: Crucify him, crucify him."—What will you then that I do to the king of the Jews ?—"What will you then that I do to him whom you call the king of the Jews ?" Pilate had no right to ask such a question. He sought by means of it to shift all responsibility for what might further be done from his own shoulders on to those of the people. His first expedient—the choice between our Lord and Barabbas—has failed; so has the second—the awful scourging; now, in anger and desperation, he appeals to the people, as a weak man who has got himself into a difficulty by stifling his conscience, and says: "What *am* I to do ?"

13. They again cried out. Their *first* cry had been for Barabbas, but Mk. does not tell us so. (Cp. Mt. xxvii. 21 and Acts iii. 14.)—Crucify him. Crucifixion was not a Jewish punishment at all, and the Jews should have been the last to ask for its infliction on "one of their own nation." "He is accursed of God that hangeth on a tree," so had they been taught from the beginning (Deut. xxi. 23). Cp. Gal. iii. 13; Heb. xii. 2; xiii. 13. Among the Romans it was regarded as a punishment fit only for slaves and for such malefactors as deserved to be classed with them.

15. So Pilate. "So Pilate washed his hands before the people, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just man, look you to it. And all the people, answering, said: His blood

- 16 And the soldiers led him away, into the court of the palace, and they called together the whole band.
- 17 And they clothe him with purple, and plating a crown of thorns, they put it upon him.

be upon us, and upon our children" (Mt. xxvii. 24, 25).—**Being willing to satisfy the people**—a touch of St. Mark. "Being willing" would be better translated: "considering it to be on the whole best." The verb is different to the one translated "will" in verse 9.—**When he had scourged him.** St. John, as usual, helps us to locate exactly the order of events. St. Luke, as already stated, twice over records the *suggestion* of the scourging made by Pilate in the hope that it would satisfy the Jews, and that no further punishment would be demanded. When they began to demand crucifixion for our Lord, and the release of Barabbas, Pilate clung the more to his shocking policy of scourging our Lord. "*Then, therefore,*" says St. John, "Pilate *took* Jesus and scourged him" (xix. 1). This was followed by the crowning with thorns, and then came the awful scene of the "*Ecce Homo,*" so fully described by St. John (xix. 4-16), and ending in the same pointed way in which it began: "*Then, therefore* (yes, now that every expedient has failed) Pilate delivered Jesus to be crucified."—**When he had scourged him.** "A Roman scourging with the *horribile flagellum*, as Horace calls it, was shockingly cruel, and the victims often died under such punishment. It ought to be inflicted by lictors, one of the public officers who attended on the chief Roman magistrates, but Pilate, being only sub-Governor, had no lictors at his disposal, and therefore our Lord was scourged by soldiers. Pieces of lead and sharp-pointed bone were often plaited into the scourges, and the victim's hands were tied to a low column, so that the bared back might be nearly horizontal."

16. And the soldiers. These were the soldiers "of the governor" (Mt.)—*i.e.*, those in charge of the Tower of Antonia. They would include the centurion (verse 39).—**Into the court of the palace**—"inside the hall which is the praetorium." The word "praetorium" may mean (a) headquarters in a camp, or (b) the residence of a governor. In the Gospels and Acts it always bears the second meaning. (Cp. Acts xxiii. 35.)—**They called together**—"they call together"—a vivid present.—**The whole band**—*i.e.*, the cohort which had been instrumental in our Lord's arrest, and who therefore would be interested in the trial and its issue. Probably these would number quite two hundred. (Cp. Mt. xxvii. 27; Jn. xix. 2, 3.) It was the custom to choose for soldiers those inhabitants of Palestine who were not of Jewish origin, and a large percentage of them came from Samaria. Now the Samaritans hated the Jews cordially, and probably these soldiers would welcome the opportunity of satisfying their hatred by special cruelty to our Lord.

17. They clothe him—*i.e.*, having first stripped him of his own

And they began to salute him: Hail, king of the Jews. 18

And they struck his head with a reed: and they did spit on him, and bowing their knees, they adored him. 19

And after they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own garments on him, and they led him out to crucify him. 20

And they forced one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and of Rufus, to take up his cross. 21

clothing—a terrible pain after the cruel scourging.—**With purple.** Mt. calls it "a scarlet cloak," but the ancients hardly distinguished these two colours. It was probably a war-cloak, such as princes wore, or a cast-off robe of state from the praetorian wardrobe. The idea was to make our Lord a mock-king, and purple was the royal colour. Notice the large number of indignities and sufferings heaped upon our Lord, as recorded in verses 17, 18, 19.—**A crown of thorns.** The plant was probably the *nubb* of the Arabs, the thorns of which are sharp and plentiful, and often create a festering wound. It still grows on dwarf bushes outside the walls of Jerusalem.

18. They began to salute him—having first placed "a reed in his right hand" (Mt.). Jn. says: "they came to him and said," thus picturing the scene more dramatically still (xix. 3).

19. They struck . . . they did spit . . . they adored. All three verbs are in the imperfect tense, denoting repeated and continuous action.—**With a reed.** This was probably the Egyptian reed, common on the banks of the Nile. Its stem was thick and firm, so as to be used as a walking staff.

20. They took off the purple from him, and put his own garments on him. Think of the agonizing pain this must again have caused our Lord, reopening the wounds of the scourging, and causing them to bleed afresh.—**And they led him out to crucify him**—"they lead him out to crucify him." What majesty in this simple statement! (Cp. Mt. xxvii. 31; Lk. xxiii. 26; Jn. xix. 16, 17.) "Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people by his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore to him without the camp, bearing his reproach" (Heb. xiii. 12, 13). It was the custom for the condemned to carry their own crosses to the place of execution.

21. And they forced—"they force." The word translated "forced" is a Persian word, meaning "to press into public service." At regular stages throughout Persia mounted couriers were kept ready to carry the royal despatches with all speed. Hence the Latin verb *angariare* came to mean (1) to despatch as a mounted courier, (2) to force to do some service. It occurs also in Mt. v. 41: "And whosoever will force thee one mile, go with him other two." As usual Mk.'s word is more forcible than

- 22** And they bring him into the place called Golgotha, which being interpreted is, The place of Calvary.
- 23** And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh, but he took it not.

that of either Mt. or Lk., who have "they found," and "they laid hold on," respectively.—**Simon a Cyrenian**—*i.e.*, from the north coast of Africa, the inhabitants of which district had a synagogue at Jerusalem (Acts ii. 10; vi. 9; xiii. 1).—**Coming out of the country.** So, too, in Lk. This shows that the crucifixion took place on the day before the great Sabbath day, for on the Pasch itself Simon would not have been working in the fields at all.—**The father of Alexander and Rufus.** St. Mark alone adds this. In St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (xvi. 13) we read: "Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord." This may be the same. And in Acts (xix. 33), in the account of the riot of the silversmiths at Ephesus, St. Luke speaks of one Alexander being "drawn forth out of the multitude." But we know nothing for certain of either. An Alexander is also mentioned in 1 Tim. i. 20, and 2 Tim. iv. 14, but in each case as one who "had done St. Paul much evil." The detail concerning Simon's two sons would be of interest to St. Mark's Roman readers.—**To take up his cross.** The common opinion is that Simon bore the cross by himself, and not in company with our Lord.

22. And they bring him. This is more vivid than Mt.'s "they came to the place," or Lk.'s "when they were come to the place." The Greek word means "they carry him," and some have thought that, owing to our Lord's extreme weakness, they had to carry him for the rest of the journey to Calvary, after obtaining by force the assistance of Simon to carry the actual cross. St. John alone gives us the detail: "And bearing his own cross, he went forth to that place which is called Calvary" (xix. 17), while St. Luke alone tells us of the words of our Lord to the women of Jerusalem (xxiii. 28).—**Golgotha.** This is the Aramaic form of the Hebrew "gulgoleth," a skull. It was a bare hill or rising ground on the north-west of Jerusalem, having the form on its rounded summit of a *skull*, whence its name. It was near the city, and contained a garden or orchard (Jn. xix. 20, 41).

23. And they gave him—"they tried to give him."—**Wine mingled with myrrh.** It was a merciful custom of the Jews to give those condemned to crucifixion a strong aromatic wine, with a view to producing stupefaction. It was the special task of wealthy ladies at Jerusalem to provide this drink. The custom was founded, it is said, on a Rabbinic gloss on Prov., xxxi. 6; "Give strong drink to them that are sad, and wine to them that are grieved in mind." Mt. describes the drink as "wine mingled with gall," perhaps in reference to Ps. lxviii. 22: "and they gave me gall for my food, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink"; and to Lam. iii. 15: "He hath filled me with bitterness,

And crucifying him, they divided his garments, 24
casting lots upon them, what every man should take.

And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. 25

he hath inebriated me with wormwood." Both gall (which sometimes stands for opium) and myrrh deaden pain.—But he took it not. "The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (Jn. xviii. 11). Yes, "even to the dregs" (Is. li. 17) shall he drink the chalice of suffering.

24. And crucifying him—"they crucify him." Notice how St. Mark throughout keeps the vivid present—*e.g.*, "they lead him out" (verse 20), "they force" (verse 21), "they bring" (verse 22), "they crucify" (verse 24), "they divide" (verse 24), "they crucify" (verse 27).—They divided—"they divide."

—His garments. "And they made four parts, to every soldier a part, and also his coat," adds St. John (xix. 23), who gives further details concerning this scene.—Casting lots upon them. The clothes of the crucified fell to the soldiers who guarded them as a perquisite. Thus were fulfilled the words of the Psalmist: "They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture they cast lots" (Ps. xxii.).

25. And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. This statement appears to be inconsistent with St. John (xix. 14), who says: "and it was the *parasceve* of the pasch, about the sixth hour," when Pilate last showed our Lord to the Jews, before finally condemning him to be crucified. The difficulty of reconciling the two accounts is well known, and no wholly satisfactory explanation has been made. Some explain by saying that St. Mark and St. John used different modes of reckoning time. But at least it may be said that St. John's phrase is very vague—"as it were the sixth hour." And may not St. Mark's words mean: "it was the third hour when they *set about* crucifying him"—*i.e.*, it was about 9 a.m. when the sentence was passed, and *then* the preparations for the journey to Calvary had to be made, and Calvary had to be reached, so that it would be nearly twelve before our Lord was actually on the Cross?—And they crucified him. "The soldiers indeed did these things" (Jn. xix. 23), but the guilt rested on the Jews "and on their children." (Cp. Acts ii. 23; Apoc. i. 7.) "They dug his hands and feet: they numbered all his bones" (Ps. xxi. 17). The punishment of death by crucifixion was common in Eastern countries centuries before our Lord came, and was ever regarded as the most severe and degrading that could be inflicted. It was practised in Egypt, Africa, Persia, India, in Greece, and in Rome. It was certainly known to the ancient Jews, and Deuteronomy (xxi. 22, 23) implies that it was practised at times amongst them. "When a man hath committed a crime for which he is to be punished with death, and being condemned to die is hanged on a gibbet, his body shall not remain upon the tree, but it shall be buried the same day, for he is accursed of God that hangeth on a tree, and thou shalt not

- 26 And the inscription of his cause was written over:
THE KING OF THE JEWS.
- 27 And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.

defile thy land, which the Lord thy God shall give thee in possession." The punishment properly commenced with scourging, after the criminal had been stripped, and so severe were these scourgings that often the sufferer died under them. Special provision was made in the case of Jewish scourgings. "According to the measure of the sin shall the measure also of the stripes be: yet so that they exceed not the number of forty, lest thy brother depart shamefully torn before thy eyes" (Deut. xxv. 2, 3). In the case of our Lord, the scourging was of the most excessive kind, not inflicted as a preliminary to execution, but to excite pity and procure freedom from further punishment (Lk. xxiii. 22; Jn. xix. 1). The criminal commonly carried his own cross, or at least a part of it, and was frequently goaded on the way to the place of execution, which was outside the city walls (Acts vii. 58; Heb. xiii. 12). Having reached the place of execution, he was stripped, and the cross was then driven into the ground, so that the victim's feet would be about two or three feet above the earth. Before the nailing took place, a medicated cup was given him out of kindness, to confuse the senses and somewhat deaden the pain. Even so, death sometimes did not take place for two or three days. Fracture of the legs was adopted at times to hasten death. As a rule, the body was allowed to rot on the cross, though sepulture was occasionally allowed.

26. *The inscription.* The cause of execution was generally inscribed on a white tablet, and borne before, or suspended round the neck of, the victim. Pilate, as Jn. and Lk. tell us, had caused it to be written in three languages—Hebrew, Greek and Latin—*i.e.*, the Hebrew or Aramaic of the Jews, the official Latin of the Romans, and the Greek of the foreign population. For the endeavour of the Jewish high-priests to get the title altered, see Jn. xix. 21, 22.—*The King of the Jews.* These words are common to *all four* of the inscriptions as given in the Gospels, and form the substance, in Pilate's eyes, of our Lord's "guilt." The inscription, as given by the different Evangelists, should be carefully distinguished. St. Matthew has: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." St. Mark has: "The King of the Jews." St. Luke has: "This is the King of the Jews." St. John has: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

27. *Two thieves.* This fact is recorded in all four Gospels. (Cp. Mt. xxvii. 38; Lk. xxiii. 33; Jn. xix. 18.) They were not pickpockets or housebreakers, but "malefactors" in a more general sense. It is thought by some that they belonged to the band headed by Barabbas, and had been engaged in one of those fierce outbreaks against the Roman domination which were so frequent in the later days of the Jewish commonwealth. This

And the scripture was fulfilled which saith: And with **28** the wicked he was reputed.

And they that passed by blasphemed him, wagging **29** their heads, and saying: Vah, thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days buildest it up again:

Save thyself, coming down from the cross. **30**

In like manner also the chief priests mocking, said **31** with the scribes one to another: He saved others; himself he cannot save.

Let Christ the King of Israel come down now from **32**

explains the fact that we read of no mockery of *them*, of no gibes levelled against *them*. They were very likely more or less popular heroes, and were even allowed to raise their voices and blaspheme our Lord.—One on his right hand, and the other on the left. St. John tenderly adds: "and Jesus in the midst" (xix. 18).

28. And the scripture was fulfilled. The quotation is from Is. liii. 12—the famous chapter on the Passion of our Lord, in which he is depicted as a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity, who hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows, who was bruised for our sins, and by whose stripes we are healed. The whole verse is peculiar to St. Mark, but is wanting in the best MSS. If genuine, it and i. 1, 2 are the only instances in which St. Mark himself notes the fulfilment of a prophecy.

29. They that passed by—"they that kept on passing by," suggestive of a stream of people coming and going. Cp. Lam. ii. 15: "All they that passed by the way have clapped their hands at thee: they have hissed, and wagged their heads at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying: Is this the city of perfect beauty, the joy of all the earth?" Cp. Ps. xxi. 8: "All they that saw me have laughed me to scorn: they have spoken with the lips, and wagged the head." To "wag the head" is frequently mentioned in O.T. as a mark of insult. (Cp. Eccus. xiii. 8; Is. xxxvii. 22; 4 Kings xix. 21.)—"Blasphemed him"—"railed on him" or "insulted him." Lk. has "derided him."—Vah—an expression of admiration, real or ironical.

30. Coming down from the cross. They thus express their joy and gratification at seeing our Lord actually on the Cross. Mt. adds the ground of their raillery: "if thou be the Son of God." It has been suggested that they remembered our Lord's reply to Caiaphas (xiv. 61), and now turned it into a jest.

31. He saved others. Even in their mockery they bear witness to our Lord's many deeds of power and mercy!

32. That we may see. These words are only in Mk., and are more strong and precise than Mt.'s "we will believe."—And they that were crucified with him. Yes, at *first*, both the robbers

the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him, reviled him.

33 And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole earth until the ninth hour.

34 And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying: Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabacthani? Which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

35 And some of the standers by hearing, said: Behold, he calleth Elias.

36 And one running and filling a sponge with vinegar,

reviled our Lord, though later one of them repented, and was promised the bliss of Paradise that very day in one of the most exquisite passages in all Scripture (Lk. xxiii. 39-43). Thus did our Lord at once begin on "being lifted up from the earth, to draw all men to himself" (Jn. xii. 32). St. Paul uses the same phrase—"being crucified with him"—of the members of our Lord's mystical Body, the Church, sharing his sufferings, and hence hereafter sharing his glory. (Cp. Rom. vi. 6; Gal. ii. 19.)

33. *There was darkness.* The darkness could not be due to an eclipse, for being Paschal time the moon was full. Here, indeed, was "a sign from heaven" which the Jews had so often asked for (Mt. xvi. 1; Mk. viii. 11): why did they not "see and believe"? The darkness is mentioned by all three Synoptists, but not by St. John.—Until the ninth hour—i.e., till 3 p.m.

34. *With a loud voice.* That at the moment of death our Lord exhibited such signs of strength, showed that he died when and as he willed to die: that "he had power to lay down his life, and power to take it up again." The "loud cry" deeply impressed "the centurion who stood over against our Lord," for "*seeing that crying out in this manner he gave up the ghost*, he said: Indeed, this man was the Son of God" (Mk. xv. 39).—Eloi, Eloi. Mt. has "Eli, Eli." The latter is the Hebrew form, the former the later Aramaic form current in our Lord's day. The words are the opening verse of Ps. xxi., a Messianic Psalm descriptive of the Sacred Passion, in which our Lord suffering for us is described as "a worm and no man," and in which we are told that "they dug his hands and feet, and numbered all his bones." This is the only one of the seven words of our Lord from the Cross recorded by St. Mark and by St. Matthew.

35. *Behold he calleth Elias.* So in Mt., who, however, omits the word "behold"—a word which seems to fix the fact that they—i.e., the priests, not the soldiers, spoke in wilful mockery and derision, making an intentional play on the words used by our Lord.

36. *Filling a sponge with vinegar.* St. John again helps us here to understand the order of events. Whilst the rude joking—

and putting it upon a reed, gave it him to drink, saying : Stay, let us see if Elias come to take him down.

And Jesus having cried with a loud voice, gave up the 37 ghost.

And the veil of the temple was rent in two, from the 38 top to the bottom.

"He calleth on Elias,"—was proceeding, our Lord spoke, and said, "I thirst." This word is recorded only by St. John, who adds: "Now there was a vessel set there, full of vinegar" (Jn. xix. 28-30). This "vinegar" was the ordinary drink of labourers in the field, and of the lower class of soldiers. According to St. Luke (xxiii. 36), a drink of this had already been offered to our Lord in derision. Now that our Lord had said, "I thirst," they thought perhaps he *would* take some of their drink; and so one of the bystanders ran and filled a sponge with it, and gave it to our Lord "upon a reed." The reed is described by St. John as being "hyssop," a wall-plant of no great size, but a stalk three or four feet long would probably have sufficed to reach the lips of our Lord. Cp. Ps. lxviii. 22: "and they gave me gall for my food, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."—Saying, Stay, let us see—"Let be, let us see." According to Mt., this is the remark of "the others," not of the "one" who raised the sponge on the reed to the lips of our Lord (Mt. xxvi. 48). By "stay" is meant, "wait a moment; don't give him that drink, but see if," etc.

37. With a loud voice. All three Synoptists speak of the loud cry at the last. St. John has: "and bowing his head, he gave up the ghost." Men die with the faintest whisper, or in silence. Our Lord, the Author of life, dies as the lord of death, "with a loud cry"—a cry that was certainly miraculous.—He gave up the ghost. Yes, exactly so: "he was offered up *because* he willed it," and he surrendered his life just when he pleased. It was not taken from him: he *gave* it up, with the words recorded only by St. Luke: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Lk. xxiii. 46).

38. The veil of the temple. This was the veil which shrouded the entrance from the Holy Place to the Most Holy. It was a thick and costly veil of purple and gold, twenty feet long and thirty broad, inwrought with figures of Cherubim. It was held most sacred by the Jews, and was passed through only by the high-priest, and by him once only each year—namely, on the Day of atonement, which fell in the autumn. The symbolism of this veil and of its rending should be carefully noted. As it hung before it was rent on the first Good Friday morning, it signified that the way to heaven, of which the Holy of Holies was a type, was not yet opened to men; while its being rent at the moment of our Lord's death that afternoon signified that at last this way was thrown open to all. As St. Paul says

- 39 And the centurion who stood over against him, seeing that crying out in this manner he had given up the ghost, said: Indeed this man was the Son of God.
- 40 And there were also women looking on afar off; among whom was Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joseph, and Salome:

in his Epistle to the Hebrews: "the way into the Holies was not yet made manifest, whilst the former tabernacle was yet standing: but now we have a confidence in the entering into the Holies by the blood of Christ, a new and living way, which he hath dedicated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh" (Heb. ix. 8; and x. 19, 20). Further, its being rent in two signified the abolition of the old Law and the establishment of the new Covenant. (Cp. Rom. vii. 4; Gal. ii. 19.) "We now pass from the Law to the Gospels, from the synagogue to the Church, from many sacrifices to one Sacrifice" (St. Leo). St. Matthew alone records the earthquake, the opening of the graves, and the splitting of the rocks (xxvi. 51, 52). Cp. Lk. xxiii. 45; Jn. xix. 31.

39. The centurion. He was in charge of the quaternion of soldiers. His traditional name is Longinus.—Over against him—"facing him," opposite to him, where he could clearly see and hear all.—Seeing that crying out in this manner he had given up the ghost. The reason given is peculiar to St. Mark. It is quite possible that on bringing our Lord back after the scourging, which he had superintended, the centurion may have heard the declaration of the Jews, that by their Law our Lord ought to die "*because he made himself the Son of God*" (Jn. xix. 7). The words, we know, made a great impression on Pilate at the time (Jn. xix. 8). And now the centurion had seen *the end*. And what an end! All that he had dimly believed of heroes is transfigured and surpassed. This man was more than they. He was the Son of God.—Indeed this man was the Son of God. So, too, in Mt. This was indeed precisely what the centurion had many times heard the chief priests and others speak of our Lord on Calvary in mockery. (Cp. Mt. xxvii. 43.) It is as though he said to them: "What you have spoken in derision of this Man, I now declare to his praise, with deep conviction." "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt. xvi. 16). Lk. has: "Indeed this was a just man."

40. There were also women. Mt. has "many women" (xxvii. 55). Cp. Lk. xxiii. 48, 49. Mary Magdalen—*i.e.*, Mary of Magdala, at the south end of the Sea of Gennesaret, "out of whom seven devils had gone forth," but "to whom many sins had been forgiven because she loved much" (Lk. viii. 2). This is the first mention of her by St. Mark. (Cp. xvi. 9.)—Mary the mother of James the Less—*i.e.*, Mary the wife of Cleophas or Alphaeus, the sister of our Blessed Lady, "who stood by the Cross of Jesus" (Jn. xix. 25).—James the Less. So called to

Who also when he was in Galilee followed him, and 41 ministered to him, and many other women that came up with him to Jerusalem.

And when evening was now come (because it was the 42 Parasceve, that is, the day before the sabbath),

Joseph of Arimathea, a noble counsellor, who was also 43 himself looking for the kingdom of God, came and went in boldly to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.

distinguish him from St. James, the son of Zebedee, and brother of St. John, who was slain by Herod (Acts xii. 2). St. James the Less probably became the first Bishop of Jerusalem (Gal. ii. 12), and we have mention of him in the history of the Council of Jerusalem (Acts xv. 13).—Joseph. See iii. 31, and vi. 3. (Cp. Mt. xiii. 55.)—Salome—*i.e.*, the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee. (Cp. x. 35.)

41. Who also when he was in Galilee followed him. Cp. Lk. viii. 2, where other names are given in addition to those mentioned here.—Ministered to him. Lk. (viii. 3) says they did so "of their own substance." Cp. 1 Cor. ix. 5 for a similar practice among the Apostles.

42. And when evening was now come—"as it was now late." St. John alone tells us of the breaking of the legs of the two thieves, and of the opening of our Lord's side with a spear (xix. 31-37).—Because it was the Parasceve. St. Mark means that "as it was now late," near the sunset when the Sabbath day began, a dead body would not be permitted to hang on the cross, and so no time was to be lost if Joseph of Arimathea was to obtain the body of our Lord from Pilate. The word "parasceve" means "preparation." Mt. (xxvii. 62) uses it without any explanation; Mk., for the benefit of his western readers, adds: "that is, the day before the Sabbath."

43. Joseph of Arimathea. St. Luke calls Arimathea "a city of Judaea," but its actual position is not certain. It may be the same as Rama in Benjamin (cp. Mt. ii. 18), or Ramathaim in Ephraim, the birthplace of Samuel, a few miles north of Jerusalem (cp. 1 Kings i. 1); others, however, place it near to Lydda. Joseph was a "rich man" (Mt. xxvii. 57), a senator or member of the Sanhedrim (Lk. xxiii. 50), a secret disciple of our Lord, "waiting for the kingdom of God" (Jn. xix. 38), and had not consented "to the counsel and doings of the Jews against our Lord" (Lk. xxiii. 51).—Looking for the kingdom of God—like Simeon and Anna (Lk. ii. 25, 38).—Boldly—a touch of St. Mark. Indeed, it was a bold petition to make. Pilate would have been in no mood to listen to any petition from a Jew on a day when he had been so troubled by them, and when he must have felt how weak he had been to condemn one of their number to death (and such a death) after declaring repeatedly that "he found no cause in him," nay, after declaring in the very act

- 44 But Pilate wondered that he should be already dead. And sending for the centurion, he asked him if he were already dead.
- 45 And when he had understood it by the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.
- 46 And Joseph buying fine linen, and taking him down, wrapped him up in the fine linen, and laid him in a

of condemnation, that "he was innocent of the blood of this just man."—And begged the body of Jesus. "It was no light matter which Joseph had undertaken: for to take part in a burial, at any time, would defile him for seven days (cp. Jn. xviii. 28), and make everything unclean which he touched; and to do so now involved his seclusion through the whole week of the Passover with all its holy observances and rejoicings."

44. But Pilate wondered that he should be already dead. This remark is peculiar to St. Mark. Death by crucifixion often did not supervene for two or three days. But the Greek here implies that Pilate, who with his own eyes had seen the state to which our Lord was reduced by the cruel scourging, and who therefore must have known that he could not live long, had at least a *suspicion* that the report of our Lord's death was true: but yet he wished to make quite sure, as the time which had elapsed was but a few hours. Pilate did not say to himself: "He has only been a few hours on the cross: it is impossible he should be dead so soon"; but he did say to himself: "Yes, it is possible he should be dead: nevertheless I should like to be quite sure about it." Pilate would not have believed that the *thieves* were dead.

45. He gave the body to Joseph—"granted," Mk. is, as usual, more realistic here than the other Evangelists. Mt. has: "Pilate commanded that the body should be delivered"; Jn. has: "Pilate permitted him" (to take away the body). But Mk.'s word "gave" has an official character and ring about it. It is a word specially used of gifts of royal bounty, and suggests to us that it was probably in this pompous, proud spirit that Pilate acceded to Joseph's request. The Greek word for "gave" occurs only twice in the N.T.—here and in 2 Pet. i. 3, 4. It means "to give freely"—and it *may* be implied that Pilate, contrary to expectation, demanded no money for the boon he was bestowing.

46. Buying fine linen. The word "buying" occurs only in Mk.—Taking him down. In this great task and privilege he had as companion Nicodemus, who had "gone first to Jesus by night" (Jn. iii.), and who now, as St John alone tells us, "brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight" (Jn. xix. 39).—Laid him in the sepulchre. It was Joseph's own grave that they used. Mt. has: "in his own new monument, which he (with his own hands) had hewed out in a rock." It was

sepulchre which was hewed out of a rock. And he rolled a stone to the door of the sepulchre.

And Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of Joseph, 47 beheld where he was laid.

CHAPTER XVI

THE HOLY WOMEN, BEARING SWEET SPICES, VISIT THE TOMB OF OUR LORD—THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD IS DECLARED TO THEM BY AN ANGEL—OUR LORD APPEARS TO ST. MARY MAGDALEN AND TO THE ELEVEN—OUR LORD GIVES THE APOSTLES HIS LAST COMMISSION TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE.

AND when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalen, and 1 Mary the mother of James, and Salome, brought sweet spices that coming they might anoint Jesus.

in a garden, probably the property of Joseph, adjoining the place of crucifixion. "There, therefore, by reason of the Parasceve of the Jews, they laid Jesus, because the sepulchre was nigh at hand" (Jn. xix. 42).—And he rolled a stone. Mt. adds: "a great stone." Cp. xvi. 4: "For it was very great."

47. Beheld where he was laid—"observed carefully." Their thought was: "He is there, and there we shall find him when the sabbath is past," for "on the sabbath day they rested, according to the commandment" (Lk. xxiii. 56).

1. When the sabbath was past—*i.e.*, on Holy Saturday evening, after sunset. (Cp. Mt. xxviii. 1; Lk. xxiv. 1; Jn. xx. 1.)—Brought sweet spices—"bought sweet spices."—They might anoint Jesus. The embalming on Calvary had necessarily been done in haste, since "the sabbath drew near" (Lk. xxiii. 54), and "that was a great sabbath day" (Jn. xix. 31). The holy women had seen the work and purchase of Nicodemus, with his "mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight"; and they would follow his example. Cp. 2 Paralip. xvi. 14: "And they buried Asa in his own sepulchre, which he had made for himself in the city of David: and they laid him on his bed full of spices and odoriferous ointments, which were made by the art of the perfumers, and they burnt them over him with very great pomp."

- 2 And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came to the sepulchre, the sun being now risen.
- 3 And they said one to another: Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre?
- 4 And looking, they saw the stone rolled back. For it was very great.
- 5 And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed with a white robe: and they were astonished.

2. And very early in the morning. Jn. (xx. 1) has: "while it was yet dark"—*i.e.*, it was still dark when they left home.—The first day of the week—*i.e.*, Easter day, "the Lord's day" (Apoc. i. 10), "the day which the Lord hath made: let us be glad and rejoice therein" (Ps. cxvii. 24).—They come—a vivid present.

3. And they said one to another. This animated and pictorial verse is peculiar to Mk. The stone was "very great": Joseph of Arimathea, aided no doubt by Nicodemus, had rolled it to the mouth of the sepulchre on Good Friday night, but they were not at hand now, and the task was beyond the strength of the holy women, yet, nothing daunted, they went on their way in trust. They seem to have heard nothing of the guards set to watch the sepulchre and of the seals placed upon the stone (Mt. xxvii. 62-66), and this is not surprising, for these arrangements had been made on the sabbath day itself, and on that day the holy women "had rested according to the commandment," and the disciples for fear of the Jews had kept within closed doors (Jn. xx. 19).

4. And looking—"raising their eyes"—peculiar to Mk.—They saw the stone rolled back. So, too, St. John reports. Mt. attributes the removal of the stone to the descent of an Angel, accompanied by an earthquake. —Rolled back. The Greek verb here is different to the one translated "roll back" in verse 3, and the change is a testimony to St. Mark's care for accuracy of detail. The verb now used tells us that "the great stone" was not rolled *right away*, but just so as to leave the opening to the tomb quite free. The use of the *perfect* tense also adds much to the vividness of the narrative. We can almost hear the voices of the holy women exclaim: "See, it has been rolled back! Yes, it has been rolled back!"

5. A young man. Mt. says: "his countenance was as lighting, and his raiment as snow. And for fear of him the guards were struck with terror, and became as dead men" (Mt. xxviii. 3, 4). Lk. speaks of "two men in shining apparel" (xxiv. 4). —Clothed with a white robe. Cp. Apoc. vi. 11; vii. 9, 13, 14. A white robe is a symbol of joy and festivity, and, as St. Gregory

Who saith to them, Be not affrighted: you seek Jesus 6
of Nazareth who was crucified; he is risen; he is not
here: behold the place where they laid him.

But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth be- 7
fore you into Galilee: there you shall see him, as he
told you.

But they going out, fled from the sepulchre. For 8
a trembling and fear had seized them: and they said
nothing to any man; for they were afraid.

says, this was a feast both for Angels and for men!—They were astonished—"they were affrighted." The Greek word points to an extremity of terror. It occurs only four times in N.T., and always in St. Mark. (Cp. ix. 15; xiv. 34.)

6. Notice the force and freshness of St. Mark's account in this verse *from the absence of conjunctions* in the first five clauses. The Angel uses the same word "affrighted," as in verse 5.—Jesus of Nazareth. The words "of Nazareth" would strike a familiar note in the ears of these holy women, "who also, when our Lord was *in Galilee*, had followed him, and ministered to him" (xv. 41). Our Lord called himself "Jesus of Nazareth" to St. Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts xxii. 8).—Who was crucified. Cp. 1 Cor. i. 23; Gal. iii. 1; vi. 14. The Angel glories thus to speak of our Lord.

7. But—a sharp word, breaking off the discourse, and turning to new matter. No time is to be lost, they are to go "quickly" (Mt. xxviii. 7), and tell the disciples that our Lord is risen.—And Peter—"and in particular tell Peter." These words are peculiar to St. Mark. (Cp. 1 Cor. xv. 5).—He goeth before you. For the phrase, as used by our Lord himself, cp. Mt. xxvi. 32; Mk. xiv. 28.—Into Galilee. So, too, in Mt. xxviii. 7. This appearance of our Lord to the Apostles and others was intended to be a solemn and formal reunion between the infant church and her risen Lord, as distinct from the various private appearances of our Lord to certain chosen disciples on and after the first Easter Day. It may be the appearance "to more than five hundred brethren at once," of which St. Paul speaks in 1 Cor. xv. 6.—As he told you—"exactly as he told you." (Cp. xiv. 28.) Mt. has: "Lo! I have foretold it to you." Lk. (xxiv. 5-7) records further words of the Angel to the holy women.

8. But they going out, fled. This verse, so full of detail and the description of emotions, is a good specimen of St. Mark's style, and is peculiar to him.—For they were afraid. Thus did they "run to tell the disciples" what they had heard and seen. On their way, and later on when telling the news to St. Peter and the others, their fear grew less, and gave way to "great joy" (Mt. xxviii. 8), for "perfect love casteth out fear" (1 Jn. iv. 18).

- 9 But he rising early the first day of the week, appeared first to Mary Magdalen, out of whom he had cast seven devils.
- 10 She went and told them that had been with him, who were mourning and weeping.
- 11 And they, hearing that he was alive, and had been seen by her, did not believe.

9. **But he rising early.** It is probable that some verses here are missing, and the fact that we read "but he" instead of "but Jesus" (for St. Mark has so far in this chapter made no mention of our Lord at all) points to a loss of some part of the sacred narrative. It has also been doubted whether the verses which follow are by the same hand as the rest of this Gospel. The question is a complicated one, and has received no final settlement. Some words and expressions which occur in them, it is said, are unusual in St. Mark, and are rather in the style of St. John. But at least it may be urged that the subject-matter and the mode of treatment are fully Marcan. We have here a brief compendium of the close of our Lord's life on earth, even as in the opening verses of this Gospel we have a compendium of his early deeds and ministry. Miracles, notably the expulsion of evil spirits, are specially dwelt upon as signs of the divinity of our Lord's mission, as is the case throughout this Gospel, and the last charge of our Lord is given in such a way as specially to appeal to St. Mark's Roman readers. Further, unusual stress is laid upon the slowness of the faith of the Apostles, and their incredulity is corrected with great severity by our Lord—and this is quite in keeping with numerous other passages in this Gospel. (Cp. ix. 30, 31; xiv. 27-30.)—**Appeared first—i.e.,** after his appearance to our Blessed Lady. St. John gives a full description of this appearance to St. Mary Magdalen (Jn. xx. 11-17).—**Out of whom he had cast seven devils.** Cp. Lk. viii. 2. For the phrase, cp. Mt. xii. 45.

10. **Them that had been with him.** What pathos and fulness of meaning in this phrase! "They had continued with him in his temptations," "all the time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out among them" (Lk. xxii. 28; and Acts i. 21). Cp. Acts iv. 13. "Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth," from being a reproach has become for all time a mark of blessing and privilege.—**Mourning and weeping.** The combination of the two is frequent in Scripture. (Cp. Lk. vi. 25; Jn. xvi. 20.)

11. **That he was alive.** According to Jn. (xx. 18), Mary Magdalen's words to the disciples were, "I have seen the Lord." The phrase of St. Mark is even stronger: "He is alive: he is on earth again, and soon you also may see him." (Cp. Lk. xxiv. 5, 23; Acts i. 3; Rom. vi. 10.)—**And had been seen.** The Greek word implies the clearness and certainty of the vision, and that it was most beautiful and consoling, as though our Lord

And after that he appeared in another shape to two **12** of them walking, as they were going into the country.

And they going told it to the rest; neither did they be- **13** lieve them.

At length he appeared to the eleven as they were at **14** table: and he upbraided them with their incredulity and hardness of heart, because they did not believe them who had seen him after he was risen again.

had been "transfigured" before her. It occurs again in Jn. i. 14: "we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (Cp. i Jn. i. 1; i Jn. iv. 14.)—**Did not believe.** Among these must be reckoned St. Thomas. (Cp. Jn. xx. 24-29.) Lk. xxiv. 11 has: "these words seemed to them as idle tales." There are two words in Greek for want of belief—one much more strong than the other. The word here used is the gentler of the two, signifying a weakness of belief, a hesitation in the acceptance of the glad tidings, rather than any wilful rejection of them. This weaker term occurs but rarely in Biblical Greek, but is used twice in this short section by St. Mark (see verse 16). Cp. Heb. iii. 12.

12. He appeared in another shape to two of them. This refers to our Lord's appearance to the two disciples (the name of one of whom was Cleophas) "as they were going into the country" to Emmaus, "sixty furlongs from Jerusalem," of which St. Luke gives so full a narrative (Lk. xxiv. 13-35).—**In another shape.** To Mary Magdalen in the garden our Lord had seemed to be "the gardener" (Jn. xx. 15); to the two disciples going to Emmaus he seemed as "a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man turning in to lodge," though he was "the expectation of Israel, and the Saviour thereof in time of trouble" (Jer. xiv. 8).

13. Neither did they believe them. This statement seems to contradict Lk. xxiv. 34, but the two statements are not irreconcilable. The disciples whom these two found in the Supper-room may not *all* have had as much faith as those of their number who said: "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon." There was an element of incredulity mixed with the growing faith of the Apostles on that day, which took time and several appearances to eliminate. (Cp. Lk. xxiv. 41; Mt. xxviii. 17.) This "shows that the belief of the Apostles in the Resurrection was due to no predisposition to expect it, but to the sheer force of the accumulating evidences."

14. At length—"later on."—**To the eleven—"to the eleven themselves."** In this verse there is no indication or record of time or of place. It is a kind of compendium of many manifestations of our Lord to the Eleven between Easter Day and the Ascension.—**As they were at table.** Cp. Lk. xxiv. 41, 42; Jn. xx. 19.—**He upbraided.** The Greek word is a very strong one, and it is nowhere else used of our Lord's rebuking the Apostles.

- 15 And he said to them: Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature.
- 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned.
- 17 And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues.
- 18 They shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands upon the sick, and they shall recover.

The same remark applies to the two words "incredulity and hardness of heart." Nowhere else in the Gospels are terms so strongly applied to the Apostles.

15. And he said to them. The scene is now transferred from Jerusalem to Galilee. Our Lord has been "seen by more than five hundred brethren at once" (1 Cor. xv. 6), and now delivers his final charge. (Cp. Mt. xxviii. 18-20.) Of what our Lord did and said to the Apostles "of the kingdom of God" during the forty days after his Resurrection (Acts i. 3), St. Mark tells us but little. But now, with great solemnity and fulness, he records what it was of special importance for his Roman readers to know—viz., that the Gospel was to be preached in the whole world and to all men; that faith was necessary for salvation; and that the fruits of faith would be great.—**Into the whole world.** "To the Greeks and to the barbarians, to the wise and to the unwise, the Apostles are debtors" (Rom. i. 14). Cp. Col. i. 23.—**To every creature.** Cp. Rom. viii. 21.

16. This verse is peculiar to St. Mark, as are also verses 17 and 18.—**He that believeth and is baptized.** Cp. 1 Pet. iii. 21; Tit. iii. 5; Gal. iii. 27; Acts viii. 37. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. xi. 6); "he that doth not believe is already judged" (Jn. iii. 18).

17. They shall cast out devils—as is afterwards recorded to have been done by Philip the deacon in Samaria (Acts viii. 7), by St. Paul at Philippi (Acts xvi. 18), and at Ephesus (Acts xix. 15, 16).—**They shall speak with new tongues**—as all the Apostles did on the first Day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 11). Cp. also Acts x. 46; xix. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 10.

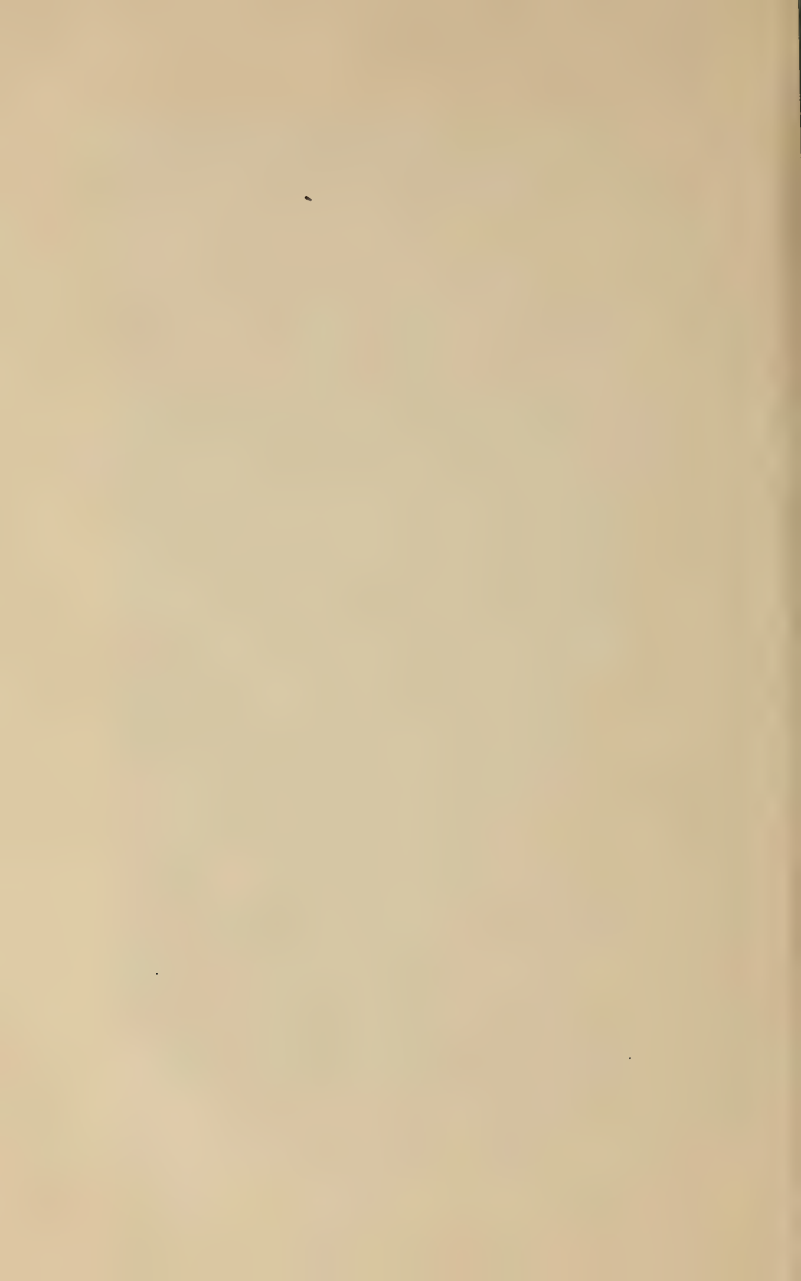
18. They shall take up serpents. So we read of St. Paul's shaking off the viper at Malta (Acts xxviii. 5). Cp. Lk. x. 19.—**They shall lay hands upon the sick**—as St. Peter did on the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple (Acts iii. 7), and St. Paul on Publius at Malta (Acts xxviii. 8). Cp. 1 Cor. xii. 9; James v. 14, 15. In a word, our Lord here reasserts what he had already said: "Amen, amen, I say to you, he that believeth in me, the works that I do, he also shall do, and greater than these shall he do" (Jn. xiv. 12).

And the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was **19** taken up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God.

But they going forth preached everywhere, the Lord **20** working withal, and confirming the word with signs that followed.

19. And the Lord Jesus. This phrase occurs in the Gospels only here and in Lk. xxiv. 3, though it is frequent in the Acts, and also in St. Paul. (Cp. 1 Cor. xi. 23.)—**Was taken up into heaven.** Cp. Acts i. 9; Ephes. iv. 10; 1 Tim. iii. 16; 1 Pet. iii. 22; Heb. iv. 14; Apoc. xii. 5.—**And sitteth on the right hand of God**—peculiar to Mk. St. Luke gives a fuller account of the Ascension (Lk. xxiv. 50, 51; and Acts i. 7-9). The phrase "sitteth on the right hand of God" conveys an idea of our Lord's Majesty and Rule. (Cp. 1 Pet. iii. 22; Rom. viii. 34; Heb. viii. 1; x. 12.) Thus did he "lead captivity captive," and "having given gifts to men," entered through the eternal gates, the Lord mighty in battle. (Cp. Eph. i. 20; Col. iii. 1; Heb. xii. 2; Apoc. iii. 21.)

20. Going forth—*i.e.*, into "Jerusalem and all Judaea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts i. 8). Very soon "their sound had verily gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the whole world" (Rom. x. 18). Yet for the moment they were to "tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high" (Lk. xxiv. 49).—**Preached everywhere.** When St. Mark wrote these words he had seen the spread of the Gospel from Babylon in the east to Rome in the west.—**The Lord working withal.** "Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world" was our Lord's last comforting assurance. The idea of our working with our Lord, and he with us, is frequent in the Epistles of St. Paul. (Cp. 1 Cor. iii. 9; 2 Cor. vi. 1.)—**Confirming the word.** For the expression, cp. Rom. xv. 8; 1 Cor. i. 8; 2 Cor. i. 21.—**That followed**—"that followed at once." (Cp. Rom. xv. 19; 1 Cor. ii. 4; Gal. iii. 5.) This concluding verse is truly in harmony with the whole tone and purpose of this Gospel. From first to last it gives a picture and record of our Lord as the Son of God finding his delights in being amongst men. And here, in the last verse, we see that spirit of "work," of "going about doing good," passing on to the fresh labourers in the fields now so white for the harvest. It contains two words, full of vigour, which occur nowhere else in the Gospels—*viz.*, "co-operating" and "confirming." Thus beneath the blessing of our Lord shall "all things work together unto good to them that love God" (Rom. vii. 28).



APPENDIX

I.—THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES

It is necessary, in order to understand the origin and position of these two sects among the Jews, to go back some years before the Birth of our Lord. The Babylonian Captivity really closed in B.C. 536, by the decree of Cyrus which is preserved to us in Esdras i. 1-4, and the first return of the exiles to Palestine was then made under Zorobabel. They found their country occupied by mixed races, who had been allowed to settle there by the Assyrian kings after the destruction of Samaria. Its condition was truly lamentable, and the presence of this strong foreign element in it complicated matters greatly, and led to many difficulties. The work of reconstruction was indeed promptly taken in hand: Jerusalem was restored; a second Temple was built; and under the rule of Nehemias reforms of all kinds were inaugurated, and the annual Feast of Purim, in memory of their deliverance, was arranged. Now in all these reforms, the exclusion of the foreign element was the chief concern: it was enforced by strong measures, and these were again insisted upon in B.C. 398, when a second and final return of exiled Jews from Babylonia was carried out under Esdras. He at once made great and drastic reforms of all kinds, notably with regard to the intermarrying with foreigners. He demanded that all should at once put away their foreign wives and children, without giving them the opportunity of becoming Jews.

But now a further danger threatened God's chosen people—and this, too, came from outside. Alexander the Great, having overthrown the Persian domination in

Syria, invaded Jerusalem (B.C. 331), and thus opened the door to Greek influence and ideas, which captivated many of the Jews, and made divisions among them. To this new force and spirit is commonly given the name of Hellenism. "All nations were to be saturated with Hellenic (that is, Greek) culture, and to be bound together by means of this intellectual force"; such was the aim of Alexander, and it was vigorously propagated by his successors. This spread of Greek civilization fostered ideas and customs most deadly to the religion of Israel, and constituted a grave danger not only to the Jews in Palestine, but more especially to those of the Dispersion. Foreign customs and pagan rites gained an even greater foothold, and continued to do so, all through the stormy days of the rule of the high-priests, and down to the time of Judas Machabeus (B.C. 167). "At first there was probably no intention, even on the part of the leading Hellenists, in any way to apostatize from the religion of their fathers: what they desired to effect was to raise Judaism from its narrowness and exclusiveness, so that they might freely participate in the advantages of Greek culture and in the joys of Greek life."

This Hellenist movement, however, continued to exert its attractive power, and called into existence, by way of protest, a party called the Assideans, or "the pious," who aimed at the strict observance of the Law and complete separation from the Gentiles. These rapidly gained ground, and their cause was much aided by the victories of the Machabees over their Syrian tyrants. They received their full development in the party known as the Pharisees, or Separatists, who are first distinctly mentioned during the time of the high-priest Jonathan, B.C. 145. The word Pharisee is derived from *Perashin* (to separate).

Originally a movement for good, and containing among their members at all times many of holy lives, "they contributed to keep alive among the Jews in the century which preceded the coming of our Lord the distinctive beliefs of the Jewish race, as, for instance, the hope of a great national Deliverer in the person of a

Messias, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, of a Divine Providence, and of an *oral* tradition, at least equal in authority with the written Law. Nor were they less successful in imparting to the Jewish multitudes their zeal in carrying out the external observances of their ancestors, such as prayers, tithes, washings, sacrifices, etc. They were ardent patriots, and made of their followers men ever willing to lay down their lives for the national faith and independence" (Gigot). They believed in the existence of angels and spirits, good and bad, in a state of rewards and punishments after death, in the resurrection of the just and the unjust. By the time of our Lord, however, many corruptions had found their way into their spirit and mode of life: an over-insistence on externals, a spirit of pride which made them "trust in themselves and despise others," a sad neglect of "the weightier things of the Law," and a generally lax morality—all of which account for our Lord's stern denunciation of them, for they ought indeed to have been the first to welcome Him.

While the Pharisees were thus the opponents of the spirit of Hellenism, the Sadducees were its promoters. They resented the yoke of the Mosaic Law, with all its restraints and requirements; they preferred the freedom and luxury of the Grecian life, and so adopted it assiduously. Hence, under the leadership of one Sadoc (B.C. 291—260), a party was formed eventually called the Sadducees, the essence of whose teaching was that virtue is its own reward, that men ought not to serve God for the sake of gain, but to do good because it is right. They taught that there is no future state of rewards and punishment, and thus practically denied the immortality of the soul. They "say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit, while the Pharisees confess both" (Acts xxiii. 8). Their tenets were mainly of a negative kind, while in politics they at all times adhered closely to the ruling power, whatever that might be. Their influence in the community was great, but this was due rather to their wealth than to their numbers, or to any enthusiasm among their followers. Though belonging to the priestly race,

they were mainly a political party, and cared more for position and power than for any religious ceremonies and customs. They held themselves apart from the people, by whom they were cordially disliked, partly because of their irreligion, and partly owing to their willingness to adopt foreign habits and customs, both Greek and Roman.

II.—THE SCRIBES

The Scribes were a religious body among the Jews who came into existence after the return from exile, and whose chief duty was to copy and explain the Law to the people. We find indeed some traces of them before the Captivity, but the Captivity added fresh glory to their name and importance to their office. "The exiles on their return would be anxious above all things to preserve the sacred books, the laws, the hymns, and the prophecies of the past. To know what was worth preserving, to transcribe the older Hebrew documents accurately, when the spoken language of the people was passing into Aramaic—this was what the necessities of those stern times demanded," and Esdras seemed raised up by God to supply this special want. Like the Pharisees, they were originally good and sincere, but later become corrupt and tyrannical. Esdras, who led a large portion of the Jews back to Palestine from Babylon, was "a ready Scribe in the Law of Moses, and prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do and to teach in Israel the commandments and judgment" (Esdras vii. 6, 10). "And all the people were gathered together as one man to the street, and they spoke to Esdras the Scribe, to bring the book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel. Then Esdras the priest brought the Law before the multitude of men and women, and all those that could understand, and he stood upon a step of wood which he had made to speak upon, and he read it plainly in the street that was before the water-gate from the morning until mid-day, and the ears of all the people

were attentive to the book. And on the second day the chiefs of the families of all the people, the priests, and the Levites were gathered together to Esdras the Scribe, that he should interpret to them the words of the Law" (2 Esdras viii. 1-13). These stately words describe the work and spirit of the Scribes at their first beginning. They were the "wise" men, "the men of understanding," of whom we read in Ecclesiasticus, and it would seem from 1 Paralip. ii. 55 that they tended to form themselves into guilds and families. Under the presidency of Esdras was founded the Great Synagogue of 120 men who completed the collection or canon of Holy Scripture, and revised and rewrote the sacred books of the Old Testament. Esdras also wrote, or caused to be written, several of the books of the O.T.—*e.g.*, Paralipomenon and Esdras; and to him must be attributed the foundation of local synagogues, in which men called "Scribes" interpreted in the vernacular those portions of the sacred text which were publicly read in Hebrew—a language but imperfectly understood by the bulk of the worshippers. Finally, to the movement inaugurated by Esdras must be attributed the beginning of *oral* traditions, claiming to give the correct meaning of the text of Holy Scripture, but which ultimately did away with its real spirit. Though later on affected by the spirit of Hellenism, and guilty of much neglect of the laws and customs of their fathers, yet, under the stress of persecution inaugurated by Antiochus Epiphanes for the extermination of the Jewish religion, they came forward as leaders of those who were zealous for the Law, and as men ready to suffer death for their faith, "choosing rather a most glorious death than a hateful life" (2 Mach. vi. 19). It was at the time of the Machabees that they became really amalgamated with the Pharisees, and from being "men of sacred letters, they became mainly priests." Thus in the N.T. we find them spoken of as "Scribes"—*i.e.*, men of letters—as "lawyers," and as "doctors."

Among the people, they at all times stood in high repute, and were saluted as Rabbi. In addition to their duties as teachers, they also acted as judges in the

Sanhedrim. As times changed, many of the requirements of the Law were found irksome or impracticable, and its adjustment to more recent times became a considerable portion of the duties of the Scribes. Thus they became in very truth legislators, and not only made the Law more precise, but introduced into it many innovations.

They occupied themselves mainly with precepts regarding sacrifices, the festival celebrations, the observance of the Sabbath, the payments to be made to the priests and to the Temple. "Piety was thus reduced to an external and mechanical formation. Nothing was of value, if not strictly regulated by an external law. Thus life under the Law became a heavy, serious burden, and the Scribes themselves had often to devise methods whereby to evade some of their own precepts" (Lk. xi. 46; Mt. xxiii. 16 ff.).

The leading Scribes had their pupils, and lectures were delivered in the outer court of the Temple, as the Gospels frequently tell us, also in special academies for the purpose. Their word on all subjects was accepted as final and decisive. Thus there was the school of Hillel (born about B.C. 112), which succeeded to the equally famous school of Shammai. Such schools were often rivals to one another, and differed in their teaching on many points—*e.g.*, matrimony (cp. Mk. x.). These two teachers lived near the time of our Lord, but for the most part, with the exception of Esdras and Sadoc, we have no record of the names of the chief Scribes. "Never perhaps was a work so vast and important done so silently."

Hillel is said to have lived to the great age of 126, and may therefore have been present among the doctors mentioned in Lk. ii. 46, while Gamaliel, his grandson, the teacher of St. Stephen and St. Paul, was at the head of this school during the whole of our Lord's ministry, as also in the early portion of the history of the Acts.

The special training for the office of a Scribe began about the age of thirteen, when every Jewish boy became "a son of the Law," with the obligation of studying and obeying it. He would then go to Jerusalem, and apply

for admission to the school of some famous Rabbi. Beginning with catechetical instruction in the Law, the pupil passed on to the study of the laws of property and contracts. Probably about the age of thirty, he was solemnly admitted to his office as Scribe, by the imposition of hands, and tablets were given him as a symbol of his work, on which to record the sayings of the wise, together with a key, with which to open and shut the treasures of Divine wisdom. Among the Scribes there were various grades: some became members of the Sanhedrim, some were doctors of the Law, while many never rose to be more than transcribers, copying out the Law and the Prophets for the use of the synagogues.

III.—THE HERODIANS

The Herodians (who are mentioned in Mt. xxii. 16; Mk. iii. 6, and xii. 13) were more of a political party than a religious sect. They accepted the rule of the Herods, and constituted a kind of *anti-national party*, who "wished the Jews as much as possible to forget their national customs and aspirations, to adopt cordial relations with Rome, and accept Greek fashions and heathenish manners" (2 Mach. iv. 13, 14), and all this with a view to the ultimate restoration of a national kingdom under one or other of the sons of Herod the Great. They were thus Sadducees in religion, and naturally the bitter opponents of the Pharisees. Our Lord speaks of "the leaven of Herod" as worldliness (Mk. viii. 15), even as He calls "the leaven of the Pharisees, hypocrisy" (Lk. xii. 1).

IV.—THE SYNAGOGUE

It is not easy to determine the exact epoch when the Synagogues of the Jews came into existence. Some contend that they owe their origin to Moses, and quote the words of St. James (Acts xv. 31) in support of their view. But the more common opinion seems to be that they are a product of the Captivity, and certainly the

circumstances attending such a time of exile make it probable that they were then instituted. Far from home, without the possibility of offering sacrifice, living under a keen sense of God's displeasure, the Jews must then have greatly desired opportunities for prayer and religious instruction in common. They could not sing the songs of the Lord in a strange land, their minds were filled with thoughts of the Jerusalem they had forfeited, and thus in these gatherings at fixed times and places they would find something at least to draw them together, to draw them to God, and to cheer their spirit. Certainly after the return from exile, under the leadership of Esdras, synagogues in great numbers were founded, not only at Jerusalem (where some fix the ultimate number as high as 480; cp. Acts vi. 9), but also throughout Palestine, at Damascus, Alexandria, Antioch in Syria, Antioch in Pisidia, Ephesus and other towns of Asia, Athens, Corinth, Philippi, and Thessalonica. (Cp. Acts xiii.-xviii.) Indeed at the rise of Christianity every Jewish community, whether in Palestine or in the Dispersion, had its synagogue. They form, even more than the Temple, the chief characteristic institution of the later phase of Judaism, and are most closely associated with the works and words of our Lord. Synagogues were built, for the most part, on "the height of the city," in a commanding position, or by a running stream of water. (Cp. Acts xvi. 13.) Most of them lay "north and south, so that the entrance was at the south, and in such a way that as they entered and prayed, the congregation looked towards Jerusalem. Usually they had three doors in front: some had a portico; and often the building was divided by two rows of pillars into three aisles, and was marked by much overlaid ornamentation" (Schurer). Sometimes they were built by a rich Jew, sometimes by a friendly proselyte (Lk. vii. 5).

The furniture of a Synagogue consisted first of the Press (or Ark) of painted wood, with a curtain in front, in which the Sacred Writings were preserved. This was placed at the upper end. In front of this there usually hung an eight-branched lamp, which was lit only on the greater Feasts. There was also a Tribune, or Bema,

or pulpit, with a reading-desk. All were furnished with seats for the congregation, while the "chief seats" (Mk. xii. 39), for the Ruler of the Synagogue and the Elders, faced the people. Alms-boxes and notice-boards completed the furniture of the buildings. The men sat on one side, and the veiled women on the other, usually with a partition between them. Ten male adults were required to form a congregation; women did not count for this purpose, though they played an important part in the meetings. (Cp. Acts xvi. 13.) A town or village that contained at least ten synagogue-members unencumbered by business, and who thus made it possible to hold a *daily* service, was considered most fortunate, since the great mass of the congregation were only free to attend on the Sabbath and on great Feasts.

The officers of the Synagogue were, first, the Ruler (cp. Lk. xiii. 14; Acts xiii. 15); next, the attendant or clerk (sheliach), who had charge of the building and its contents. He was also the chief officiating minister, and the one who usually read the prayers. The possession of a good voice and an aptitude for teaching are said to have been among the necessary qualifications for his post. Next, the verger (chazzan; Lk. iv. 20), who opened the doors of the building for the services. He announced the advent of the Sabbath and Feast-days from the roof of the Synagogue with a thrice-repeated trumpet-blast, which was the signal for the suspension of work. He summoned the reader for the Lessons, and invited the priests to give the blessing at the appointed time. It was he, too, who performed the scourgings that might be ordered to be inflicted. (Cp. Mt. x. 17; xxiii. 34; Mk. xiii. 9; Acts xxvi. 11; 2 Cor. xi. 24.) The services were usually held on the Sabbath-days, and on Mondays and Thursdays, at the third and ninth hours, and consisted of prayers and instructions. The reading of the Law and the Prophets was followed by an exposition of the same in the form of a sermon. (Cp. St. Paul at Antioch. Acts xiii. 15.)

Synagogues were also used as schools for children, and as law-courts; sometimes even as places for political gatherings.

V.—THE SANHEDRIM

The word Sanhedrim is derived from the Greek *Synedrion*, literally an assembly, or "a sitting together." In the Book of Numbers (xi. 10-16), we read of Moses making complaint to Almighty God concerning the great burden he had to bear alone in leading the Hebrew nation. He asked for some relief, and God hearkened to his prayer. Seventy elders were chosen, and God gave them of the spirit of Moses, and they aided him in his task. It is to this appointment that the tradition of the Jews traces back the origin of the Sanhedrim, the supreme tribunal of their nation, possessed of both legislative and administrative powers. This fact is disputed by some, who see in the Greek etymology of the word an indication that the origin of the assembly should be assigned to a period subsequent to the Macedonian supremacy in Palestine. Twice over in the Second Book of Machabees there is reference to "the senate of the Jews," and this phrase may refer to the Sanhedrim (2 Mach. i. 10, and xi. 27). It was made up of chief priests—*i.e.*, the heads of the twenty-four classes into which the priests were divided, elders and Scribes, presided over by the high-priest. It counted seventy-one members, perhaps in memory of Moses and his seventy helpers.

Its members were to be of pure Israelite descent, humble, and learned; all were required to be married, and above thirty years of age, well-instructed in the Law, and of good report among the people. They were governed by a president and two vice-presidents. Besides these, there were secretaries and other officers. (Cp. Mt. xxvi. 58; Mk. xiv. 54.) It is probable that at the time of the decline of the Machabean dynasty its powers were greatly strengthened. Certainly, in the time of our Lord, it superintended the ritual of public worship, regulated the Jewish calendar, enforced the exact fulfilment of the Law, punished false prophets, and even exercised judicial control over the high-priests themselves.

The place in which the sessions of the Sanhedrim were ordinarily held was a hall called Gazzith, or the Hall of Hewn Stone, supposed to have been situated in the south-east corner of one of the courts near the Temple; but in special exigencies it seems to have met in the house of the high-priest. (Cp. Mt. xxvi. 3.)

Our Lord was arraigned before this tribunal as a false prophet (Jn. xi. 47), and St. Peter, St. John, St. Stephen, and St. Paul as teachers of error and deceivers of the people. The power of inflicting capital punishment was taken from it about the year A.D. 30, and with this agrees the answer of the Jews to Pilate: "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death" (Jn. xix. 31). The confirmation and execution of death sentences then belonged to the Roman procurator.

The Sanhedrim sat in the form of a semicircle, the president occupying the centre of the arc, the prisoner that of the centre of the chord of the arc, while the two heralds sat a little in advance of the president, on his right hand and his left.

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